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30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW
Tel: 01225 442244
Email: ngc@futurenet.co.uk

EDITORIAL
Man Who Would Be King Jes Bickham
Space Boots Geraint Evans
Reviews Editor Martin Kitts
Production Editor Danny 'Boy' Geary
Art Editor Justin Webb
Deputy Art Editor Paul Edwards

CONTRIBUTORS
Sarah Kennett, Kieran MacDonald, Jonnie Bryant, The Ghost of Weaver Past, Louise Broom, Louise Parker, Thomas Jefferson Caligula Mayo IV, Phil Mlynar, Laura Sheppard, Steve Bradley, Lee Hall

PRODUCTION
Senior Prod Co-ordinator Kirsty Bell
Production Manager Rose Griffiths

CIRCULATION
Product manager James Greenwood
Circulation manager Regina Erak

ADVERTISING
Key Account Manager Phil Jones
Classified Sales Executive Tom Farrer
Deputy Advertising Director Jayne Caple

PUBLISHING
Senior Editor Sean Pipkins
Group Art Editor Ian Miller
Publisher Nick Stevens
Nick Stevens Mobile Eyebrow
Promotions Manager Tamara Longden
Overseas Licensing Simon Wear
Publishing Director David Roberts

SUBSCRIPTIONS & DISTRIBUTION
Future Publishing Ltd, FREEPOST BS4900, Somerton, Somerset TA11 7BR.
Tel: 01458 271184

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PRIME GAMING

If you'd have said to use a year ago that *Metroid Prime* would be one of the best games ever made we'd have scoffed. Laughed. Dismissed you with a cheery wave. Not because we didn't believe in it, but because it's been surrounded by so many unfortunate incidents. Early footage looked unconvincing: one by one, the other games being developed by Retro Studios – *Raven Blade*, *Thunder Rally*, a soccer game – were cancelled, and there were redundancies aplenty.

WORLD CLASS

But Nintendo knew what they were doing, amid all the unpleasantness. They stepped in, put their hand on the tiller and focused *Retro*, like a laser, on one of the company's most valuable properties. And the results are astounding. The only downside is that PAL gamers can't play the game (along with our other big hitter this issue, *Resident Evil Zero*) until March – and if there was ever a reason to import, this is it. You can read Geraint's excellent review starting on page 36.

THINGS TO COME

Metroid aside, there's been so much Gamecube goodness this month, it's no surprise that the machine has almost caught up with PS2 in Japan, and overtaken Xbox in the US. Five new games from Capcom, for a start; the Game Boy Player add-on unit; and the confirmation of a Cube conversion of both *Ocarina of Time* and the never-released *Ura Zelda*. Currently these are available only to folk who pre-order the new *Zelda* game in Japan, but Nintendo have to bring the games over here, too. There'll be riots, otherwise.

Anyway, the upshot of all this is that 2003 is going to be even better than 2002. We can't wait. (Oh, and apologies for those awaiting the big free gift we mentioned last month – it's been delayed for an issue or two. Hopefully the complete guide to *Mario Sunshine* will see you through, though…) See you next month!

Jes Bickham Editor
ngc@futurenet.co.uk

TURN TO PAGE 36
…To see why *Metroid Prime* is utterly aces!

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WHAT'S IN THE MAG?

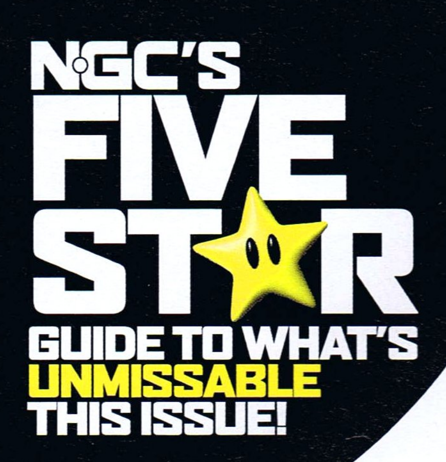
PREVIEWS — Page

Previews	Page
Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance	6
Fireblade	12
Robotech Battlecry	14
Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers	16
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance	17
RTX Red Rock	18
Dead to Rights	20
Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter	22
Preview round-up	23
Zelda	24

News	Page
Capcom go Gamecube crazy	28
Game Boy Player	31
Pokémon Sales	31
Ocarina of Time on Gamecube	32
The Big Q	33

Reviews	Page
Metroid Prime	36
Metroid Fusion	46
Resident Evil Zero	48
Harry Potter: Chamber of Secrets	56
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger	60
Reign of Fire	62
Bomberman Generations	64
Legends of Wrestling 2	65
The Sum of All Fears	67
Disney Football	68
BMX XXX	69
GBA reviews	70
Sonic Mega Collection	74

Extended Play	Page
Starfox Walkthrough	80
Tips Extra	90
I'm The Best	94
Mailbox	98
Timesplitters 2 mapmaking	104
Gaming Planet	112
EndGC	114





METROID PRIME

Morphin' incredible, it is. Our ten-page review starts here.

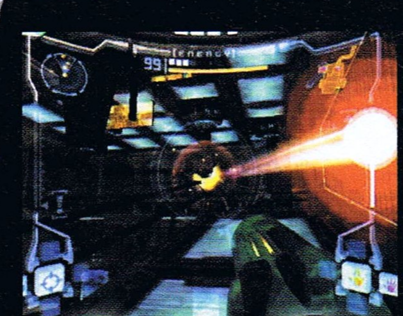


RESIDENT EVIL ZERO

Brrrains… Brrraaaainssss… Zombie horror reviewed.

2 PAGE 48







METROID PRIME

PAGE 36

HOLY MOTHER OF MIKE!

She's been away for a long time, but Samus' return is the best thing to happen to Gamecube… Reviewed!

MEET ENJiKi

Our peanut-smuggling mascot isn't here purely for hentai fans to dribble over. Well okay, she does have certain charms, but she also serves the vital function of saving you, dear reader, from having to endure too many unpleasant pictures of us lot. For example, if it wasn't for Enjiki introducing this contents page, you'd have a photo of one of us (probably Geraint) dressed in a similarly snug outfit, pouting at the camera while making silent whale gestures. And we're simply not that type of magazine. Yet.



METROID FUSION

It's like a little sister for the Gamecube version. With missiles.

TS2 MAPS

Step by step, how to create the finest *GoldenEye* maps.

4 PAGE 104



STARFOX TIPS

"I want something sweet before I'll save your people." Done deal, dudes.

PAGE 48

PAGE 46

PAGE 104

PAGE 80

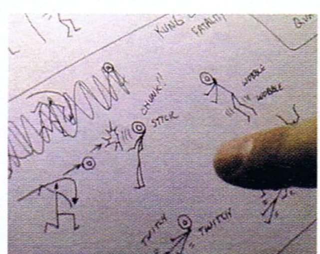




△ No ring-outs or stage fatalities this time. Instead, fighters are kept in by an invisible wall.

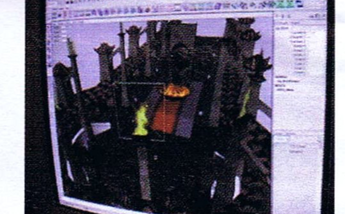


△ The range of throws on offer is somewhat disappointing.





△ As seems to be the fashion these days, *Mortal Kombat* has a 'Making of'...



△ ...documentary. Pleasingly, this one is both extensive and very detailed.

MORTAL KOMBAT DEADLY ALLIANCE

Back from the cesspit of gaming's past, and it's angrier and bloodier than ever before...





How times change. Ten years ago, when Ed Boon and John Tobias' infamous 2D digitised battler hit home consoles, it caused something of an uproar. Realistic-looking sprites (well, for the time, anyway) not only beat the living daylights out of each other, but also pulled the still-beating hearts from their victims' chests, tore heads and spinal columns from their quivering bodies, and toasted them to their bare bones while they stood on the brink of defeat. Nice.

Ten years ago, this was proper lock-up-your-daughters-style gaming. Ten years ago Nintendo weren't having any of it. Ten years ago, the blood was banned from the SNES version, while happy Mega Drive owners button-coded their way into blood-fuelled depravity.

As shocking as all this was back in the day, though, there was something far more sinister at work. Something far more terrible and infinitely more depressing: *Mortal Kombat* was actually, as fighters go, a steaming crock of dung. Make no mistake – it was total rubbish, and it didn't take long for people to peer through the red mist to see that this was so. So it wasn't long before gamers turned their attention to the emerging new breed of 3D battlers.

Things did get better for a while, though. *Ultimate Mortal Kombat 3*, for example, had a superb, open combo system and sufficient depth and hidden extras to make it rewarding enough for purists willing



Three fighting styles for the price of one! Now *that* is a bargain...



■ Each character has three different fighting styles you can cycle through, all of which need to be mastered completely to gain any advantage. With a quick click of the L-trigger you can easily switch between them. This not only changes your character's stance, but also opens up a new set of moves (both regular and special) to play around with. Here are some examples of this innovative new feature in action…



■ Shotokan and Dragon are Sub Zero's styles. The Z-button in Shotokan is an escape move – in Dragon style it's a taunting move.



■ Li Mei's Baji Quan style is fluid, making flurry punches easy. Lui He Ba Fa is best used for kicks. You can combo between both styles.



■ The last style (other than the weapon) can only be activated if you've won. It's the infamous fatality move. Amusing.

to put in the effort, but then the series slowly lost the plot again. The N64 was party to some particularly rancid efforts (*MK: Mythologies*, anyone?), although most sensible folk had long since lost patience with this once-promising franchise.

BACK TO THE UNDERWORLD

So here we are once again, in a place where dark forces are at work. The sorcerer Quan Chi has formed a deadly alliance with Shang Tsung, and together they've defeated the emperor of Outworld, Shao Khan, and have travelled to earth to defeat Earth Realm's finest warrior, Lui Kang. Once slain, nothing can stand in the way of their total domination of both realms.

So begins *Mortal Kombat: Deadly Alliance*. Apparently, this is the *Mortal Kombat* the creators always wanted to make but the technology wouldn't allow it… until now. True to their word, Midway have delivered a gorgeous-looking fighter. The arenas in *Deadly Alliance* are large, detailed and wildly different in appearance, ranging from icy rings with interactive (read 'smashable') stalagmites, to the usual lava-filled caverns and temple courtyards. The fighters themselves are also quite impressive. A handful of the original veteran characters like Scorpion, Sub Zero and Sonia return, alongside a host of brand-new fighters – all of which are suitably imaginative and demonic-looking. Again, first impressions when you start duelling with them are encouraging. With nicely-rounded character models, decent costumes and plenty of frames of animation to keep the action fluid, it certainly looks the part and it's definitely leagues away from the cardboard cutouts of *MK*'s earlier efforts. If you leave the game running at the main menu, for example, you can watch some particularly delicious character exhibitions of the fighters prancing around the arenas in some gorgeously animated motion-capture routines. Even more pleasing are the high levels of gore spilling from your characters with every connected strike. Deliver a jab to your opponent's eyes and they'll stumble back, clutching their face, as blood streams down

SPIKED

LI-QUAN — DRUNKEN-FIST

One of the three fighting styles for each character lets you whip out a handy weapon. While some characters can use these for special counter-attacks and throws, others have the ability to impale the opposition with it, leaving it in their punctured opponent for the rest of the round. You may lose your weapon, but your opponent will slowly bleed to death. Bonus.



For more gruesome shots of *Deadly Alliance* in action, and some of the weirdest special moves you're ever likely to see. Prepare to be offended…



ST FIGHTER** While many people credit *Mortal Kombat* as being the first fighter to use digitised characters, the awful *Pit Fighter* (possibly one of the worst SNES games ever) preceded it.



"Gore and fatalities are the essence of the game"







△ The blood and gore has always been an important feature, and *Deadly Alliance* continues the trend with ludicrous levels of spurting claret.



△ The button-mashing is back once more in this 'break-bits-of-wood' filler.

"THE ESSENCE OF THE GAME RELIES HEAVILY ON GORE AND FATALITIES..."



△ Walk through bloody arenas and you'll leave bloody footprints.

NGC RUMOUR! Despite the small roster on the character selection screen, there are rumoured to be over 26 playable characters in the finished game.

their chest. Brilliant! Ahem. And if you pummel their heads with the back of your hand before chopping them in the liver with a machete, expect the arena floor to resemble a Halal butcher's after an enthusiastic morning's beheading.

NEXT-GEN KOMBAT

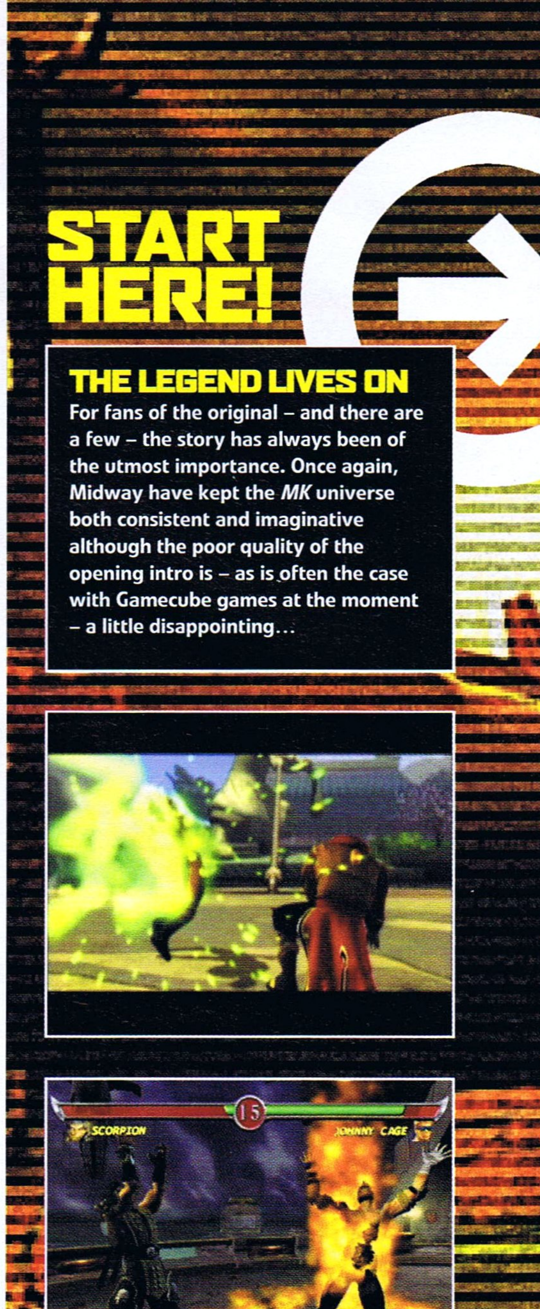
We'd expect nothing more from a *Mortal Kombat* game, of course. While it's all now in glorious 3D, the essence of the game relies heavily on gore and fatalities, thus remaining faithful to the series. There are however, a great number of differences this time around, largely because the fight mechanics have been rebuilt from the ground up, but also due to the host of options now available to you.

Naturally, there are the standard arcade settings that let you battle through progressively harder opponents, but this can no longer be considered the main mode. Konquest mode (as it's known) is the place you'll be spending most of your time. A little similar to the Mission mode in *Soul Calibur*, Konquest is like a long-winded training exercise, where you journey from place to place, being set different challenges by various characters. Acting as your

SMASHING



From what we've seen, you can't actually smack your enemy out of the ring. However, some stages have pillars that you can smash your opponent into. Hit them hard enough and you'll be able to destroy the object, dishing out even more damage in the process.



THE LEGEND LIVES ON

For fans of the original – and there are a few – the story has always been of the utmost importance. Once again, Midway have kept the *MK* universe both consistent and imaginative although the poor quality of the opening intro is – as is often the case with Gamecube games at the moment – a little disappointing...

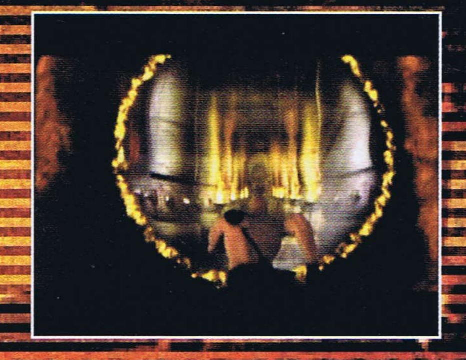






OUT OF THIS WORLD...

While everything looks and sounds completely different, many of the original game's best features have been retained…















SUMMON THE POWER

While you have all the usual rubbish jabs and sweeps, most characters have access to some of the most ludicrous moves you'll ever see. Razor-bladed hats, Telekinesis that can slam opponents to the ground, flaming plumes that scorch you from the ground up and throws that turn you into a surfable popsicle! That Boon's got a lot to answer for…











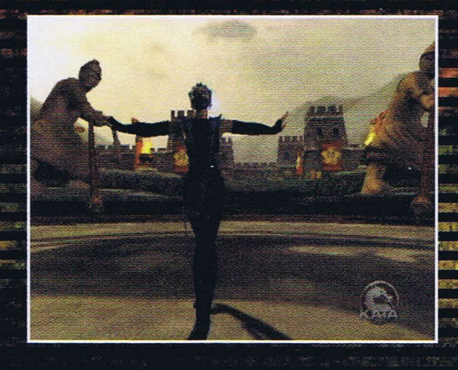
JUST BEAUTIFUL

The animation of the characters and the architecture on the arenas themselves are nothing short of breathtaking at times. Swirling vortices and screaming plasma (eh?) provide the backdrop to some of the most impressive-looking fisticuffs you'll ever see. Check out the *Soul Calibur*-style Kata exhibitions in the intro to see what we mean…















OLD FAITHFUL

Most of the original cast return for you to pit your wits against – and many of the old moves reappear too. The likes of Kano, Sub-Zero, Sonia, and Shang Tsung are all here and many of their old special manoeuvres can be executed in exactly the same way. There are plenty more to uncover, too. The likes of ninja Kitana and the robotic Cryax are hidden away for you to gradually uncover. Unfortunately, our fave Lui Kang has perished at the hands of evil – although anything can happen in MK, so maybe a resurrection is on the cards at some point…

CHARACTER STATUS

Unsurprisingly, the usual rules apply. Three potential bouts – the first to emerge victorious in two wins. Whoever wins gets the opportunity to dish out some ugliness to the loser, whether it be ripping out their spine or smashing the skull to remove their brain. With all the innovative features in the game, it would have been nice to have seen some other optional rules thrown in for variety…

BLOOD AND GORE

You won't be disappointed. The old claret gushes out of every possible part of the body – so much so that it looks a little daft at times. In a nice touch, wherever you shimmy around the arena, bloody footprints follow.

CURRENT STYLE

This meter lets you know what style you're in. Be mindful of which you've selected. There's nothing worse than expecting to deliver a nasty special to finish your opponent, only to taunt or pull off something else completely useless while your opponent smashes your sorry hide into the dirt.

SUB-ZERO

HAPKIDO

SHOTOKAN

mentor, they ask you to practice things such as evasion, 'pop-ups' (moves that knock your opponent into the air), and the many combos that you'll have to learn. Every time you're successful in a set of challenges, you'll earn Kurrency – different-coloured coins that you can use to buy features, characters and costumes in the Krypt (see the Tales From The Krypt box opposite).

So how does it all play? The good news is that *Mortal Kombat* is unique – just as it was all those years ago. Midway have managed to cram loads of fresh ideas into the game. To start with, each character has three fighting styles and stances that you can switch between freely during battle (a bit like Gen in *Street Fighter Alpha*). This adds a great deal of depth to every character, as it essentially triples the amount of moves they have. Fully grasping the strengths and weaknesses of even one fighter will take you some time.

KEEPING IT REAL

When it comes to the actual battling, there's certainly plenty to get your head around. Reversals, side-stepping and blocking make up your defensive repertoire – although, for some inexplicable reason you can't seem to run at your opponent.

"THE ARENAS PROVIDE SUITABLY BROODING AND ATMOSPHERIC BACKDROPS FOR BATTLING IN"

Even more bizarre is the fact that the buttons mapped for attacking vary quite a lot, and aren't as predictable as more straightforward fighters. There are no straight punch and kick buttons of varying strength or direction, for example, and as a result each button seems to be context-sensitive. In one fighting style, the X-button delivers a punch; in another, it may deliver a kick. Also, in the same fighting style, attempting a special attack could result in a flurry of punches, despite that button previously delivering only kicks. It's all very confusing, and it does take some getting used to, especially if you're not mindful of the fighting style you're in. Furthermore, despite the arenas being expansive, if you beat your opponent to the edge of the ring, you're unable to knock them out of it – not even if they're in mid-air. It's hardly a crucial aspect, but

BLOOD MONEY The original *Mortal Kombat*, mainly off the back of the controversy surrounding it, sold more than seven million copies worldwide. It was the *GTA: Vice City* of its day, if you will. But without cars.



The bloodiest *Kombat* yet…

TALES FROM THE KRYPT

Each character has a lengthy tutorial in the Konquest Mode…



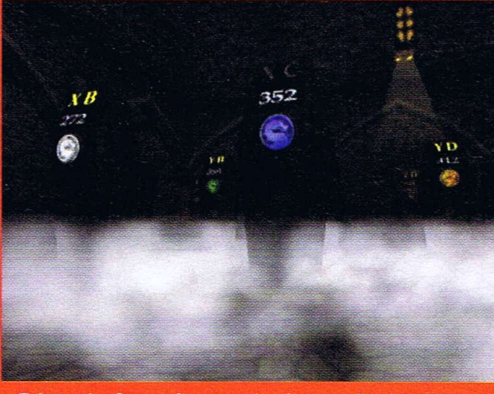
■ Konquest runs like a little story, with each character journeying from point to point, learning moves from different fighters in typical baby-step fashion. This is invaluable – there are so many concepts and tactics to understand that this helps it sink in much more easily.



■ From the most basic move sets, to learning how to 'pop up' your opponent and juggle them in the air – you'll soon find yourself getting the hang of things. It gets more complex, though, when you learn to combo and incorporate multiple styles in one attack.



■ Once the journey runs its course, you'll have to face off against yourself – putting everything you've learned to the test. You'll be rewarded for your hard work of course. Every successfully completed challenge earns you different-coloured Kurrency to spend in the Krypt.



■ Taking the form of a giant (and we really do mean *giant*) graveyard, there are hundreds of coffins which you spend your cash to open. You won't know what's inside until you've spent your money – the contents range from coins and costumes to character profiles.



△ Some characters' swords – like Quan Chi's here – seem to display a worrying level of cheapness in their uses.

UNREAL
We'd like to see the likes of Goro included, or some other completely fantastical beast. So far all we've seen are motion-captured fighters.

△ Almost every impact results in a satisfying fountain of blood from the recipient.



△ There it is… 'Finish Him' correctly and the resuts are highly amusing.



△ Many of the moves are accompanied by some spectacular visual effects.



△ Bo Rai Cho is the slow-moving, flatulent lard-ass of *Deadly Alliance*.

WHO?!



If you're not up-to-date on your *Kombat* lore or simply want to know why exactly it is your character is scraping someone's bloody skull into the tarmac before consuming their flesh, then *Deadly Alliance* has more than enough character biogs and profiles to get you well and truly up to speed.

considering the lava pools, swamps and icy waters surrounding each stage, it would have been nice to have seen foes burned or frozen to death. A strange omission given the bloodthirsty nature of the series, and even more so in light of the series' previous games, where spiked-pit deaths and multi-layered stages were the order of the day.

FINISH HIM!

So far so good, then. From what we've seen, there's enough innovation and original features in here to ensure that the series need never sink to the despicable lows of the N64 games. The character roster is impressive, with a good range of unique and interesting fighters. The arenas provide suitably brooding and atmospheric backdrops for battling against, and the depth added to the fight mechanics via the 'style' switches, alongside the hidden moves, combos and fatalities means that there'll be plenty more to uncover in the months to come. We'll be delivering the definitive review of the game next issue, but we're expecting - should the niggles be ironed out - a truly excellent fighter, and one that offers both gore and spectacle as well as finely-balanced gameplay. And that really would be a first for Mortal Kombat.

NGC VERDICT



Yes, we like it – but we'd be lying if we didn't say the alarm bells weren't ringing. *Deadly Alliance*, is trying really hard to break new ground and it clearly shows. The high standard of presentation throughout the game is spot-on, the range of characters is commendable, and the wealth of unlockables is bewildering to say the least. True, there's still much that we haven't seen yet and the game isn't quite complete – but a number of niggling issues have already crept in. We suspect that the three-style gimmick may perhaps make things more complicated than they need to be, and conversely, the balancing on some of the moves is *extremely* worrying… fingers crossed that it all gets sorted out.

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WHAT WE WANT TO SEE INCLUDED

■ Some work on the brazen cheapness of some of the standard moves. If those stay the game will be completely ruined.
■ Animalities and Babalities from the previous games were a nice touch.
■ Some tidying up of the control, responsiveness and tightening of the collision detection. We don't like being smacked when we're out of range.

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 3 **4** 5





THE KNOWLEDGE

- Eighteen missions scattered, like napalm parcels, across some of the world's hottest hot spots: the Amazon, er, Arizona, the Alps and the Arctic. Ahem.
- Four different campaigns – in each you are required to fly both attack helicopters and hulking great transporters.
- A stack of weapons, including sniper cannons and Dubya's favourite laser-guided missiles.
- Use stealth during some objectives – but mostly just go in and kill everything in sight.
- 'Involving' storyline.
- Fairly standard visuals. Still, they're better than on the PS2.



△ Objectives have to be completed under cover of darkness, as well as during the day. Fortunately, you still get to blow things up a lot.



△ Have it! The game throws explosions about like they're going out of fashion – but you'll get penalised for hitting the wrong targets. Which is where these handy red squares come in.



△ Enemies will fire back and try to take you down, but it's hard to compete with several tons of laser-guided missile. Get in there!



△ Bingo! This is where an American should be shouting "You've hit paydirt, boy!"



△ The locations are fairly uninspiring, it has to be said. *And* there's plenty of fog about.

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- **Reign of Fire (NGC/76)**
Okay film, okayish Gamecube offspring. Drive around hunting giant dragons. In a small jeep.



FIREBLADE

Love the smell of napalm in the morning? Better pay attention.

If you're familiar with the classic *Strike* series or, more recently, N64 'copter game *Chopper Attack*, then you can probably have a fairly accurate stab at guessing what *Fireblade* is about.

An 18 mission jaunt through the Arizona desert, Amazon, Alps and Arctic, the game splits proceedings up into two distinct camps: pelting about in the Vendetta chopper – a high-speed, all-action flying machine used for assault missions – and hovering around in a transport carrier, used during the game's transport-and-rescue objectives. Unsurprisingly, the Vendetta missions prove the most enjoyable.

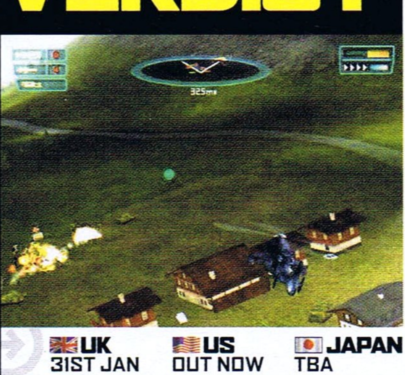
Thrown into the mixer are reams of scenery-decimating weapons, including sniper cannons, rail guns, swarm missiles and laser-guided homing missiles. There are upgrades in this area too, as well as the opportunity to earn turbos for your chopper - useful when the action starts to get a bit hot in the jungle.

Predictably, some of the missions require you to sneak in using stealth, but most are unhindered by clever-, clever tip-toeing. Instead, this follows closely the *Desert Strike* blueprint, opting for post-apocalyptic village-flattening ahead of silent-but-violent.

So, it's got all the firepower you need, but will it prove fun beyond the first couple of hours? We'll see. Soon.

NGC VERDICT

Unlikely to feature anything new over the PS2 version that's already out, *Fireblade* will probably be a decent slice of chopper fun – whether it's got the necessary staying power remains to be seen. Certainly, it didn't last very long on Sony's machine, and the mix of styles – fast choppers and transport vehicles – made the controls annoying. Things are likely to be the same here. Still, we're willing to wait, especially as *Desert Strike* was one of our favourite ever games.



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ANTICIPATION RATING



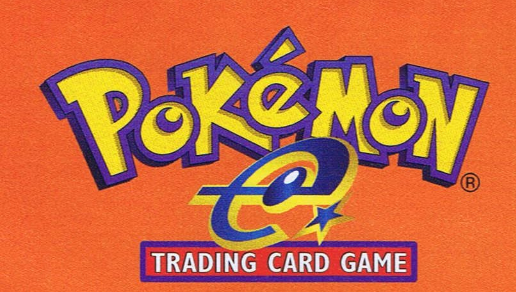


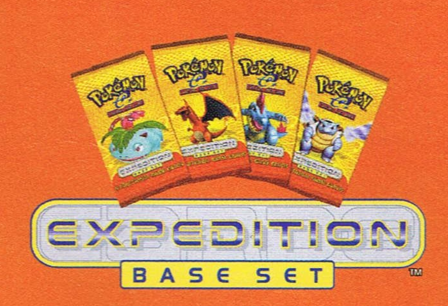

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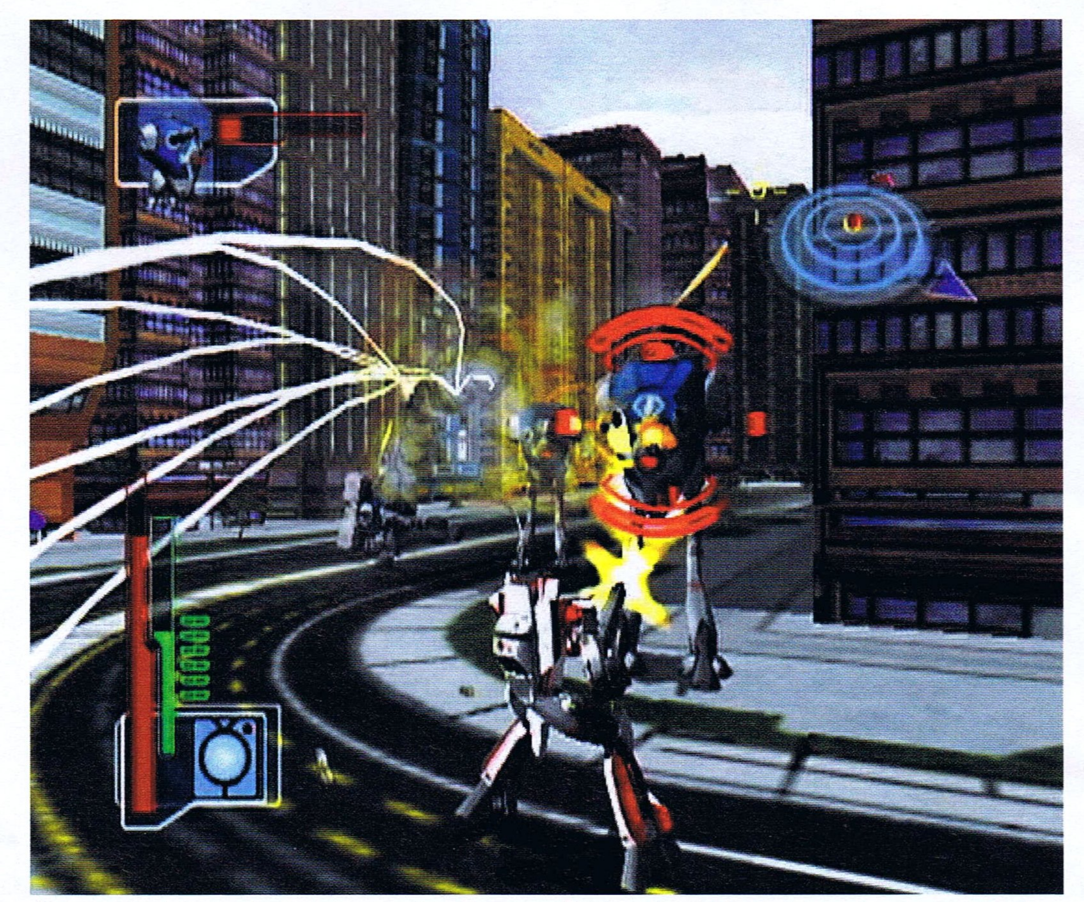
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HANDS ON

We get our greasy mitts on the final build of TDK's lovely new blaster. If you're a Zentraedi-hating nut-bag, a robo-fetishist with a penchant for laser-death, or just an anime-lover who appreciates cute girls encased in 300 tons of iron, then this could well be what you're looking for.



△ The simple cel-shaded visuals do the game a lot of favours, making even the most hectic encounters easy to see. They also tie in rather well with the between-mission stills, giving *Robotech* a welcome visual consistency throughout.



△ Bring buildings crashing down…



△ 'Techs have a range of attributes.



△ The sense of scale is often very impressive, especially in flight.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- **Frantic blaster based on the hugely popular anime brings massive robot battling to life on Gamecube.**
- **Cel-shaded visuals and gorgeous stills make this the most atmospheric and accurate Robotech game to date.**
- **Fly, walk or hover around environments as you morph your Veritech fighter into three different forms over land, air and water.**

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- **Lady Sia (NGC/62)**
  Slick, tough platforming adventure featuring a sword-wielding sorceress. Nothing special, but a beautiful-looking game all the same.

ROBOTECH BATTLECRY

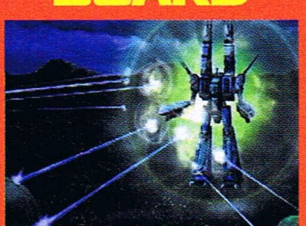
Get ready for giant stompy robot Saturday-morning cartoon action (with a twist of cel-shading).

We have to admit – we've got something of a soft spot for these kinds of games. Of course, it all depends on your own taste, though. The prospect of controlling heavily armed, oversized metal effigies in an anime-themed blaster is probably one of those things you'll loathe abjectly, or embrace with excitable, fanboy enthusiasm. Like we sometimes do.

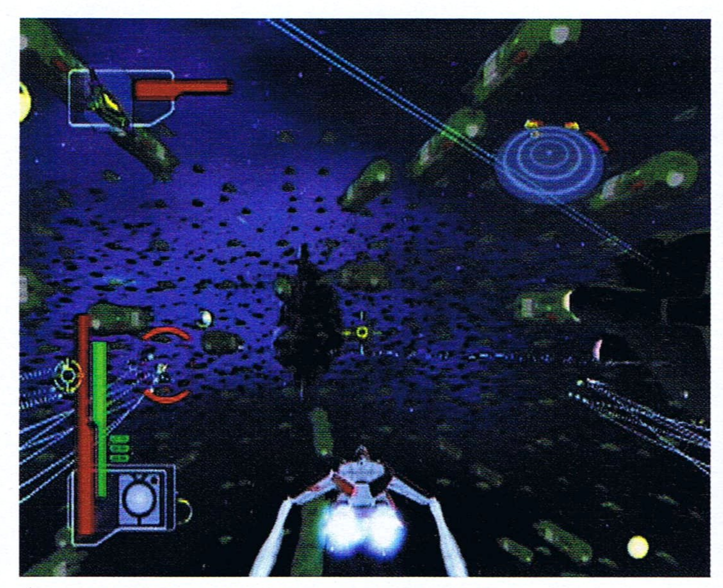
Anyway, the story behind *Robotech: Battlecry* is your usual operatic sci-fi guff. It's the not-so-far-flung future, Earth has been ravaged by years of war and death, and there's little hope of a ceasefire, until a phenomenal event triggers the onset of peace so the stupid humans unite against a common threat. This comes in the form of a mile-long megaship that, after ripping through hyperspace, collides with the earth before coming to rest on a tiny island called Macross.

Once the devastation subsides, humanity calls a ceasefire and pools its finest scientific minds in order to investigate the crash site. The information they retrieve is eventually used to develop a new



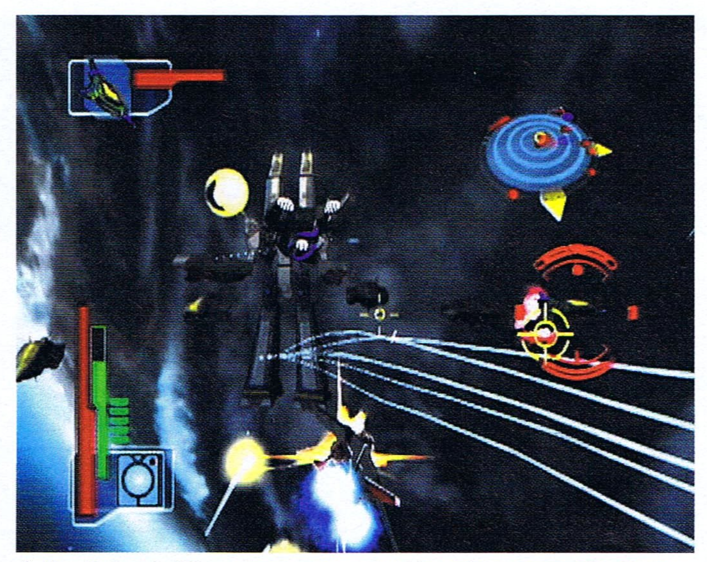


Throughout the game you're treated to lengthy story sections, unfolding through a series of stills and cheesy narration, that really draw you into the plot.

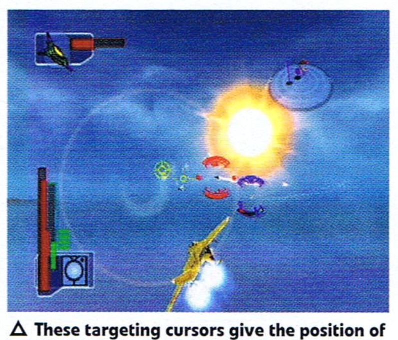

The vast majority of those ships are actually part of a backdrop…

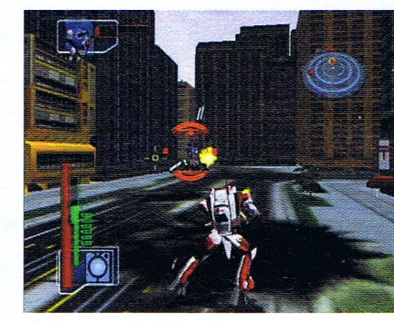

Tips are given out on the fly.

MASSIVE!
The game boasts a very healthy 46 missions for you to battle through – while early stages can be a little simplistic and tedious, the later ones are exceptionally tough, with some clever bosses requiring a good understanding of your Veritech's shape-shifting abilities, and the differences in weapon power that result from it.


Your Veritech's different forms open up new kinds of weaponry while affecting the handling of your craft. Getting to grips with all of them can be quite fiddly.


Much of the surrounding area is destructible, helping to fuel the atmosphere of robo-battling mayhem.


These targeting cursors give the position of the enemy as well as showing you their course.


The street battles add a touch of diversity to the game.

science called Robotechnology. Fearful that more of these huge ships will eventually come visiting, humanity uses Robotechnology to create a planetary defence system – the fruits of this labour are a squadron of giant transformable craft called Veritech fighters. These are eventually put to good use when an alien race called the Zentraedi come to earth looking for their lost ship.

Taking control of one of these Veritech fighters, it's down to you to save humanity. Your ship has the useful ability to transform from a fighter plane to a robot, to a kind of amalgamation of the two. Essentially a 'robot' in 'disguise', if you will. The missions are fairly basic, requiring you to defend a particular area by taking out all the alien craft you encounter, in air- or land-based skirmishes. While the arcade-style blasting is pretty simplistic, it's the high standard of presentation that's most impressive. The cel-shaded visuals are well suited to the game, and the vast amount of anime stills used to tell the story are wonderful.

It may not set the gaming world alight, but this is exactly the kind of game Robotech fans been have been waiting for – doing justice to the spirit of the anime while delivering decent-enough action to keep you enthralled. Review next month…

> **"YOUR SHIP HAS THE USEFUL ABILITY TO TRANSFORM FROM A FIGHTER PLANE TO A ROBOT"**

NGC VERDICT

It amazes us that no one has ever managed to make a decent Robotech title. The story itself is perfectly suited to a game of this type, so it's refreshing not only to see a developer capitalise on this, but to see it executed so well, while remaining true to the anime's origins.

The gameplay isn't great, though. It's a pretty basic, follow-aim-shoot, follow-aim-shoot scenario which does, on occasion, threaten to get rather repetitive, but the variety of missions and locations does go some way to alleviating this problem. As do the lovely stills and narration that drive the story forward. What's more, the smoothness with which your craft morphs between shapes, and the strategy involved in using them may prove to be its saviour.



UK DEC 2002 | US NOV 2002 | JAPAN TBA

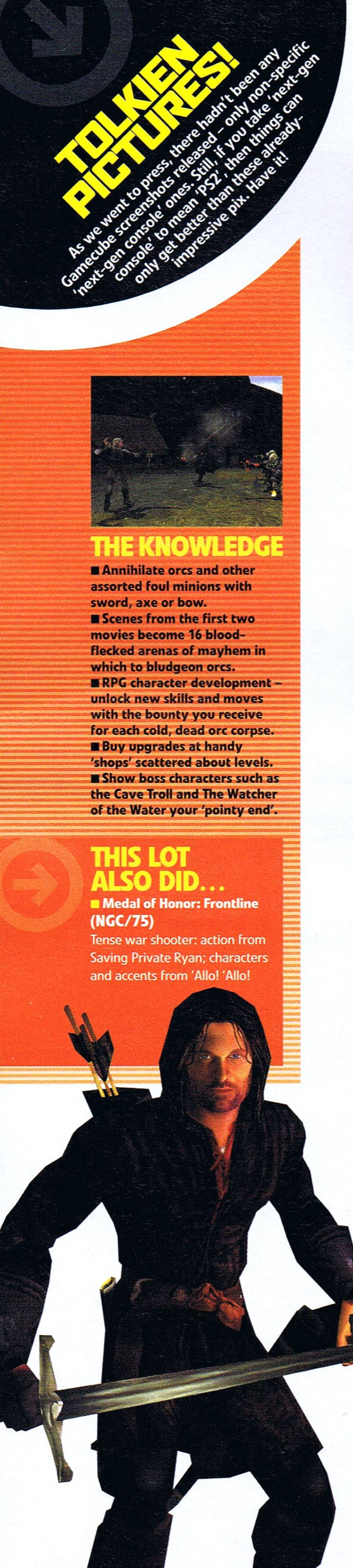
WHAT WE WANT TO SEE INCLUDED

- A four-player mode would have been brilliant – especially in the city levels. Unfortunately, this won't be included.
- Despite the stills being rather tasty, some animated scenes would be even nicer, maybe even directly from the anime as an unlockable bonus or something.
- A greater variation in the action. It's all a bit fire-and-forget, to be honest.

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 **3** 4 5

ROBOT KNOWBOT… Robotech's Veritech 1 was, in actual, verifiable fact, the basis for the hugely popular JetFire Transformer, manufactured by plastic effigy conglomerate Hasbro.



TOLKIEN PICTURES!

As we went to press, there hadn't been any Gamecube screenshots released – only non-specific 'next-gen console' ones. Still, if you take 'next-gen console' to mean 'PS2', then things can only get better than these already-impressive pix. Have it!

THE KNOWLEDGE

- Annihilate orcs and other assorted foul minions with sword, axe or bow.
- Scenes from the first two movies become 16 blood-flecked arenas of mayhem in which to bludgeon orcs.
- RPG character development – unlock new skills and moves with the bounty you receive for each cold, dead orc corpse.
- Buy upgrades at handy 'shops' scattered about levels.
- Show boss characters such as the Cave Troll and The Watcher of the Water your 'pointy end'.

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- **Medal of Honor: Frontline (NGC/75)**

Tense war shooter: action from Saving Private Ryan; characters and accents from 'Allo! 'Allo!



△ Heavily-armed midget Gimli feverishly defends his tackle.

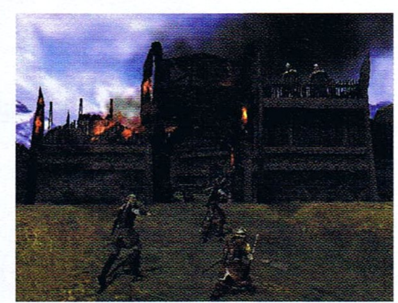


△ Your dudes develop more effective combos as things progress.



△ You'll come across lots of atmospheric locations from the movies, such as Balin's tomb here.





△ The Cave Troll weighs two tons and has a spiky metal club and a migraine. Don't annoy him.

THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS

Fight in fantasy! Cleave orcs in twain in this lush hack-a-thon.

After some kind of nourishing action-RPG affair that'll let you experience the epic scale and depth of Tolkein's magnum opus? Hmm. Better wait until Vivendi Universal release something with a bit more depth than snap this up, then – EA's latest expensive franchise effort is certainly more sword than sorcery.

You see, Universal have the licence to make games based on the books – EA's game is unapologetically based on the enormo-budget movie version, a third-person hack-'em-up reminiscent of *Gauntlet* or *Golden Axe*. You play as either Gimli the dwarf, smug elf Legolas or Aragorn; your job is to defeat the dark lord Sauron by steaming into huge groups of orcs, orcs and more orcs, and hack them into battery-hen food with an assortment of medieval weaponry and what seem like bizarre kung-fu combos, over 16 levels taken from the first two movies. There's also a vague RPG aspect that lets you upgrade your fighter's abilities (handily, you can switch characters at any time).

Fans will doubtless moan that you can't play as a hobbit, but as everyone knows, hobbits are cowardly, gluttonous midgets who are rubbish at fighting monsters, and are best left at home while the big people do the legwork. More soon...

NGC VERDICT

As far as action-packed third-person slash-'em-ups go, *The Two Towers* doesn't look like it's going to break many moulds, but it looks great and the action is smooth, fast and gory. There's not a lot more to say about the game, though – slick as it may be, it's something of a one-trick pony. Good job it looks like it's going to be a pretty good trick, then. Never mind the hobbits, though – you can't play as Gandalf, either. What's that all about, then?



UK	US	JAPAN
2003	NOW	TBA

ANTICIPATION RATING

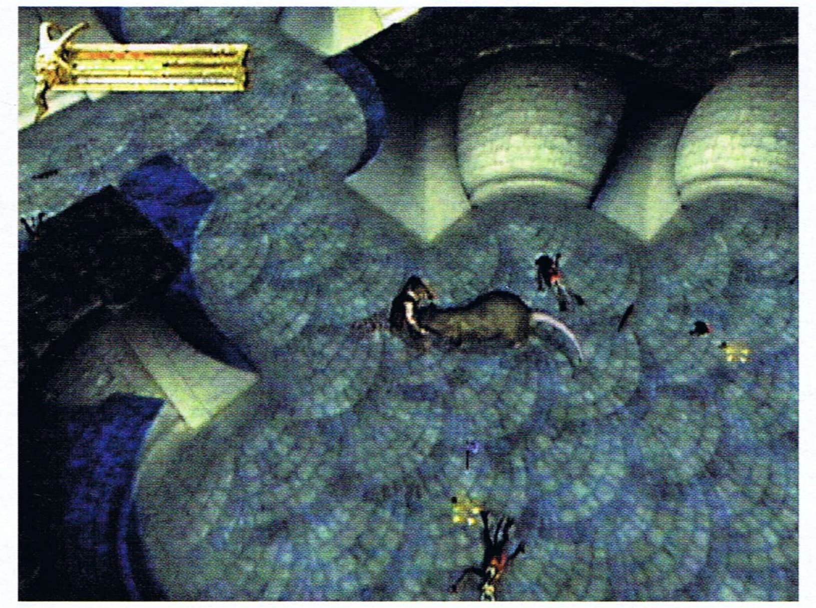
1 2 **3** 4 5



Δ Like all RPGs ever, *BG* starts in a tavern run by a wench with huge baps.



Δ There's a new Thieves' Guild around – and it's even eviller than the old one.



Δ Rubbishly, the first mission sees you having to rid the pub cellar of giant rats. Demeaning…



Δ Once you're done with the spiders, why not smash all the barrels?



Δ Upgrading your skills is great fun. Yes.



Δ Nice visuals; slightly choppy frame-rate.



Δ A brown monster.



BALDUR'S GATE DARK ALLIANCE

Hail, hardy adventurer! The AD&D RPG gets a +GC modifier.

If you're familiar with the *Baldur's Gate* PC games – or indeed, have ever had cause to roll a 100-sided die – you'll know the territory we're in here. For the uninitiated, however, the *Baldur's Gate* series is a giant nerdy cake of PC adventuretainment set in the AD&D universe, a bit like the stupid cartoon that used to be on after Saturday Superstore in the 1980s.

It's the port of Baldur's Gate on the Sword Coast, there's a new Thieves' Guild in town, and a larger-than-average quota of corpses are starting to pile up on the streets. When a swift kosh about the bonce from a grubby ruffian leaves you penniless, you decide to investigate further…

There's your usual stat-based RPG guff here, but the best addition is the two-player cooperative mode, which turns *Baldur's Gate* into something of a *Golden Axe*-style monster cull, as you and a mate slice your way through dungeons and dragons in an attempt to get to the bottom of the menace, upgrading and collecting as you go. Think *Phantasy Star Offline* with a large twist of NPC yakking. The Gamecube port's been stripped down quite a bit from the hefty PC games: gone are the tedious hours of creating characters and juggling with boring statistics – just decide if you want to be an elf, human or dwarf, and start killing. Review next issue…

THE KNOWLEDGE

- **Classic dungeoneering set in the third edition Advanced Dungeons & Dragons ruleset, beloved of friendless, unhygienic D20-wielding geeks everywhere. (*A little harsh, don't you think? – Ed*)**
- **Pared-down version of the complex PC game, which does away with dull stat-juggling and endless pages with numbers on them.**
- **Play as one of three upgradeable characters, either on your own or with a friend.**
- **Original soundtrack by 'acclaimed composer' Jeremy Soule. That's right – *the* Jeremy Soule! Great, huh?**

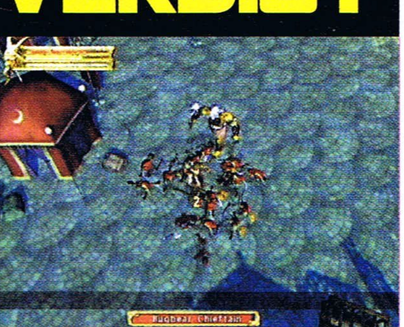
THIS LOT ALSO DID…

- **Icewind Dale (PC)**
Similar dungeoneering 'fayre', but with more snow and taverns. Recently sequelled.



NGC VERDICT

You can't beat a good rumble in the dungeon, and if it's a bloody big ruck you want, there's no shortage of axe-fodder in *Dark Alliance*. The graphics are nice enough, although it seemed a bit jerky when we played it; it was silky-smooth on PS2. Shocking. It should keep stat fans amused until *PSO* comes out, but we're concerned that all the streamlining might result in little more than a pseudo-*Gauntlet* with extended yakking bits.



UK 2003 | US OUT NOW | JAPAN TBA

ANTICIPATION RATING







3

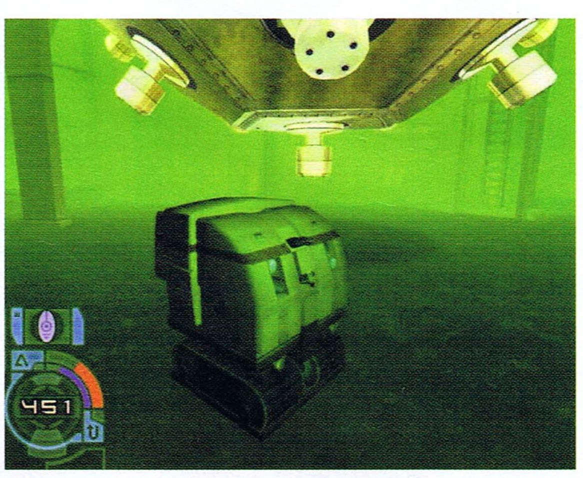




△ The jetpack accessory in full effect. It works for short bursts in low gravity.



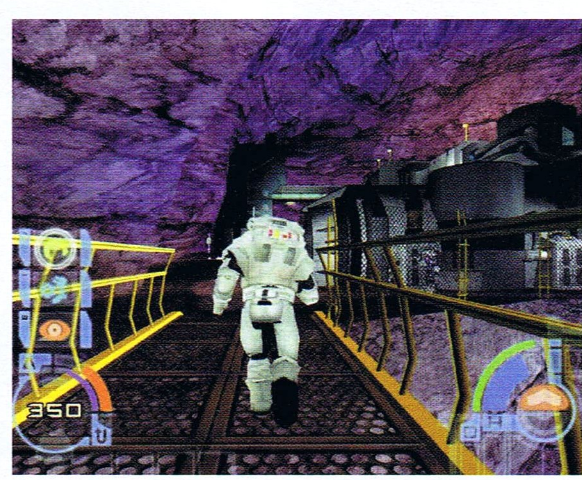
△ Shoot out the walkway to provide a ramp for a robot that can't climb stairs.



△ Taking control of this basic robot means you can enter a gas-filled room and open the vents, allowing Wheeler to proceed in safety.



△ Wheeler has a grappling hook inside that mechanical hand of his. He uses it to swing around from certain points in the ceiling, or pull himself up to ledges that can't otherwise be reached.



△ The environments we've seen are all set in the abandoned base or on the Martian surface. We're promised many other different types.



THE KNOWLEDGE

- Introducing E.Z. Wheeler, the man with the mechanical hand. And the mechanical eye too. He's quite a mechanical bloke.
- Solve puzzles and fight aliens on the dusty Martian surface.
- Explore abandoned bases and rescue stranded survivors of the alien attack.
- Control robots using IRIS, your friendly digital assistant.
- Two-player racing and deathmatch modes, too.

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- **Star Wars: The Clone Wars (NGC/75)** Fight millions of droids on the ground or in the air.
- **Jedi Knight II: Jedi Outcast (NGC/75)** First-person Jedi action.

RTX RED ROCK

Tomb Raider in space, with junkyard robots, aliens, and a Radical Tactics Expert…



You know, there's no point in people trying to colonise Mars, or any other godforsaken lump of space rock for that matter, because as soon as they settle in to their new oxygen-free home, they inevitably end up get stiffed by marauding aliens.

That's the way it goes down in *RTX Red Rock*, as contact with the Martian colony is abruptly cut off, and the good folk of Earth find themselves at war with the LEDs. That's Light Emitting Demons, of course, so named because of their fondness for neon signs and flashing computer screens. How very retro.

They're also quite partial to killing Martian colonists, but where a base filled with thousands of people failed, one man can succeed. One man called E.Z. Wheeler (pronounced the American way), who just happens to be an RTX, or Radical Tactics Expert, and… *who writes this stuff?* Surely not George Lucas.

Following a mishap on his previous mission, Wheeler is blessed with a robotic hand, which can be upgraded to fire things such as electric darts and grappling hooks. He can use it to cut through certain metal walls, and it also makes him a great marksman.

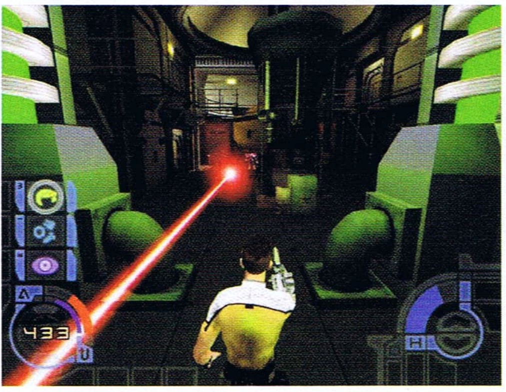
"FOLLOWING A MISHAP ON HIS PREVIOUS MISSION, WHEELER IS BLESSED WITH A ROBOTIC HAND"

His other enhancement is an artificial eye with up to four vision modes. It means he can see through doors to check if there are enemies waiting on the other side, or call up a digital map to find his way around the twisted wreckage of the base.

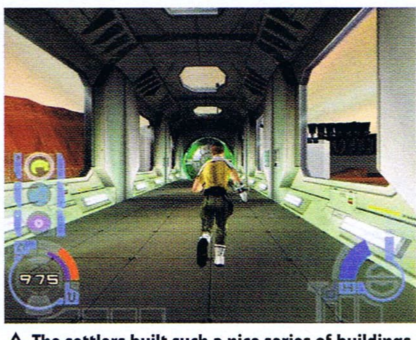
Much of the game is about *Tomb Raider*-ish exploration and combat. The LEDs pop up all over the place, initially clad in space suits, and the old *Zelda* lock-on is used to keep the bad guys visible at all times.

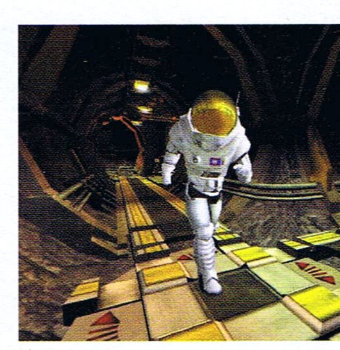
The feature that sets the game apart from most similar third-person titles is the ability to take control of various robots throughout the Martian base and beyond.

Wheeler also carries an artificial intelligence module around with him called IRIS (Independent Removable


△ The Lucas touch is apparent in those laser beams.


△ Locked on and ready for battle. Die, alien scum, etc…


△ The settlers built such a nice series of buildings. Shame the aliens decided to smash them all up.


△ To infinity… And beyond!


△ Wheeler poses for the camera, demonstrating the relative smoothness of the game's circular doors.


△ This section is a lengthy puzzle involving killing alien invaders and finding a way to shut off the electrical field ahead. Droids and death-dealing await.

BUZZ OFF

When Wheeler needs to step out onto the Martian surface, he has to get suited up, otherwise his eyes will swell up and his head will probably burst, just like Arnie's nearly did in Total Recall. And we wouldn't want that to happen. Anyway, Wheeler can't go outside without his Buzz Lightyear space suit, which he dons in a smart animation sequence, before venturing through an airlock. It has a jetpack in the back, for super-bouncy jumps.

Information System, in case you're wondering), which can be plugged into special slots on consoles or machinery. IRIS's built-in personality means she'll object to getting put inside an 'ugly' robot such as the trundling tank that's required to access a nuclear reactor on a very early level. Later on, she'll be able to take charge of something more flattering, in the form of a curvaceous 'entertainment' robot.

The robots can go places Wheeler can't venture, even in the suit he uses to explore outside the base, leading to some interesting possibilities for splitting puzzle-solving. They also function as transport in certain cases, including a robotic spider that works a bit like a motorbike for getting around the planet in a hurry.

The game features a novel polygon compression system, which means things such as circular doors can be stored in the console's memory as low-polygon models, and expanded on the fly to smooth them out on the screen. However it's done, the curved edges of the doors really do look round, and the same system is applied to many other models throughout the game. LucasArts claim to achieve up to nine times the normal polygon-pushing performance with this technique.

The two-player modes weren't in place when we had a go on the preview version, but the developers are aiming to include racing sequences and deathmatch modes, involving the game's large cast of robotic extras.

COMING SOON
With any luck we'll have a more complete preview version of the game pretty soon. Look out for updated opinions as soon as that happens.

NGC VERDICT

This isn't bad at all, although the version we played was nowhere near finished, and crashed so often it was impossible to get a proper impression of how the finished game will play. Right now, the flashy effects such as the polygon-compression thing seem to be at the expense of the game's frame-rate, which could become rather juddery. We're sure this will be fixed by the time *RTX Red Rock* is due for release, as the developers at LucasArts have assigned one of their most experienced teams to the project.



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WHAT WE WANT TO SEE INCLUDED

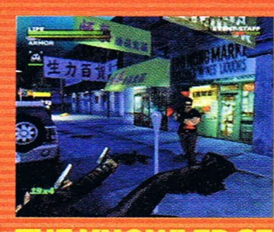
- For our more 'mature' readers, a short interlude of *Paradroid*-style grappling before taking control of a droid. That would be sweet.
- Co-operative missions.
- Four-player modes.
- A giant boss alien that eats Wheeler, and then craps out his mechanical hand and eyeball would be good, too.

ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 **3** 4 5





THE KNOWLEDGE

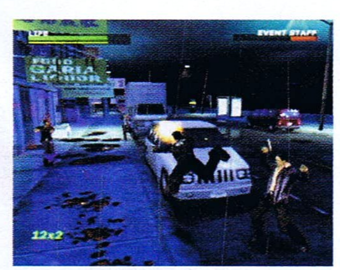
- Over 20 weapons for wasting whacked-out weirdos.
- Disarm enemies and waste them with their own guns.
- Capture human shields to absorb those painful bullets.
- Introducing Shadow, the invincible attack dog.

THIS LOT ALSO DID…

- **Smashing Drive (NGC/69)** Abysmal driving game with crap graphics and handling. One of the worst things on Gamecube.



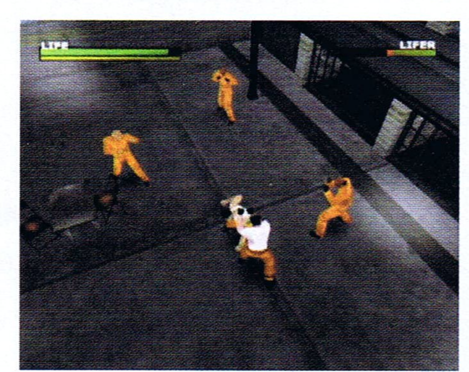
△ There's no need for music or sound effects during these slow-motion bits. Just a long, blood-curdlingly insane scream.



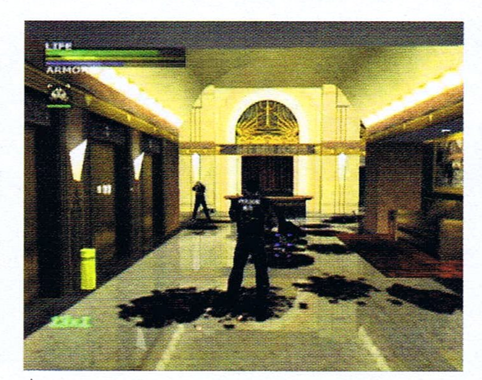
△ Love the way the dude gets out of the way in case Jack bumps into him.



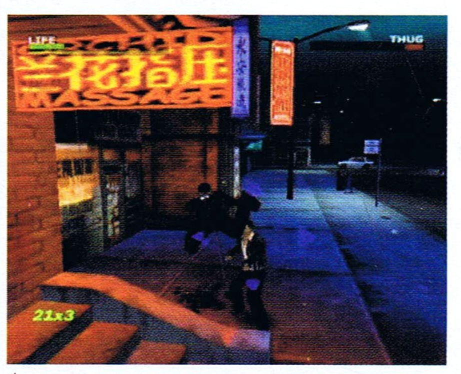
△ "Hur hur. Hur hur." Jack enjoys the sight of his dog taking a 'street meal'.



△ The second section of the game sees you banged up in chokey, for all the murdering what you done.



△ "Right then. Who else is up for some?" Cue the onslaught of hundreds of suicidal enemies.



△ "I am the law!" screams Jack Slate, as he pumps hot lead into yet another pedestrian's living brain.

DEAD TO RIGHTS



One man and his dog… Went to waste some wiseguys.

Few situations are more dangerous for a cop than being backed into a corner by 20 shotgun-toting, policeman-hating villains. But when that cop is the proud owner of a bullet-proof magic dog that can be summoned out of thin air, the odds suddenly don't seem as insurmountable.

Shadow's the name, and ripping the throats out of bad guys is this trusty mutt's game. We've no idea where he vanishes to after finishing his gory work, but having a such an unusual smart-bomb certainly makes *Dead to Rights* stand out from the crowd of *Max Payne*-alikes.

Of course, the human hero Jack Slate is certainly no pantywaist either. Among his repertoire of Payne-esque moves, Slate can slow down time to kill people at his leisure, viewing the resulting animations from a selection of different camera angles.

Enemies can be taken hostage as human shields, then disposed of with a bullet to the head when no longer needed. Slightly harsh, considering he's supposed to be upholding the law, but then they were all probably guilty of something.

There's a huge body count as Jack blasts his way through the criminal fraternity, and a few minigames to break up the relentless cycle of shooting stuff, watching a cut-scene, then shooting some more.

No UK release date yet, but we'll have an import review next month.

NGC VERDICT

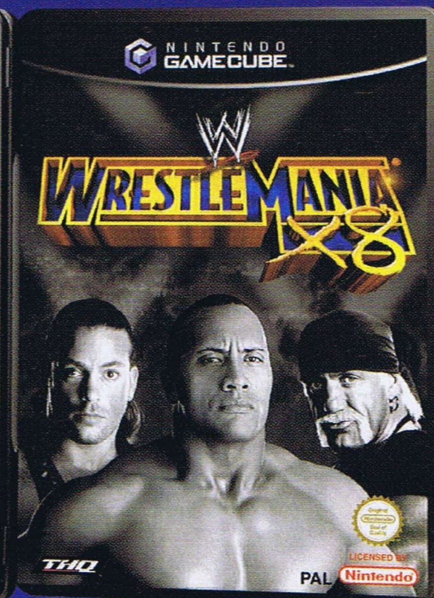
It's a lot like the on-foot shooting missions from *Grand Theft Auto III*, except with a much more linear path through the 15 short levels, and a better camera/targeting system. There's a bit of *Winback* in here too, in the way you can make Jack duck behind crates or jump out from behind walls, and it plays like it was meant to be an arcade game. Compared to the tough Xbox version, the difficulty level has been considerably toned down on Gamecube.

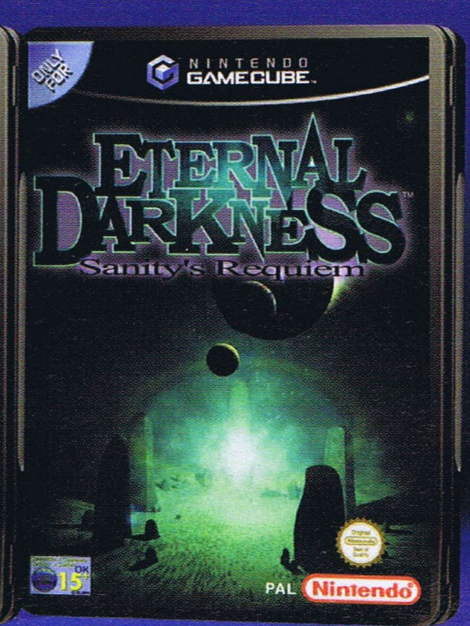


Test yourself against the best.







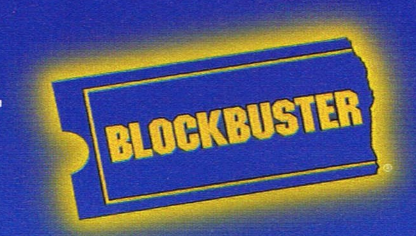


These are some of the best Gamecube titles released in 2002 – which means some of the very best ever. Rent them from Blockbuster and you can see just how good they are - before deciding to pay the full price. And they're just part of our huge range of Gamecube games.

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IT'S ANOTHER EXCLUSIVE!

You've got *Timesplitters 2*. You'll soon have *Metroid Prime*. And next year you can get your laughing gear around this: *Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter*. Get first details here...



THE KNOWLEDGE

- First-person shooter that looks, feels and – let's face it – basically *is* a Cube *Halo*.
- Play as Mace Griffin (see right for embarrassing dress sense), who is framed, sent to (giggle) penal colony Delta, and slowly simmers there before getting a release and unleashing twenty bells of crud via a gun barrel.
- Pilot different ships, including steaming great carriers and smaller fighter craft.
- 'Rag doll IK system' – ie, realistic damage to limbs.

THIS LOT ALSO DID...

- **Star Trek Invasion (PSone)**
  Actually not bad Star Trek game, with slightly wobbly visuals.
- **Tom and Jerry in Mouse Attacks (GBC)**
  Let's pretend this didn't exist.

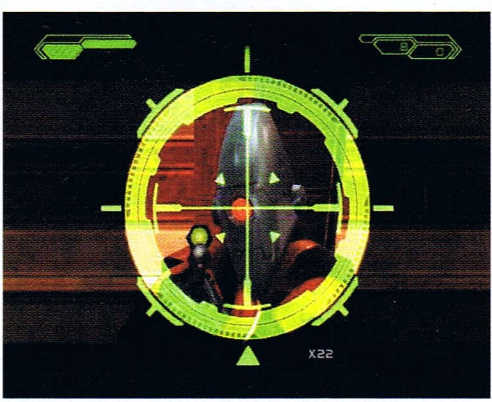


△ Peeyow! The environments are a mix of *Halo* and *Dark Forces*.

△ We love this one. Look how happy he looks about being shot to pieces.



△ Like *X-Wing* on the PC, you get the full-on cockpit view.



△ Realistic damage, eh? We'll see just *how* realistic now...

MACE GRIFFIN BOUNTY HUNTER



Don't get angry. Get angry *and* even. Using a selection of guns.

It's got some tough competition already on the Cube, and with *Metroid Prime* on the horizon, things aren't about to get any easier for the ludicrously dressed Mace Griffin. But with a very silly and pretty expansive story that nails together Cape Fear and Alien, an intriguing and ambitious environment, plus – of course – some heavyweight weaponry that can shatter limbs and remove arms, this second Gamecube *Bounty Hunter* could yet make a decent impression.

It's a long time ago in a galaxy far, far away, and Mace Griffin is looking for revenge. Luckily for him, Manc developers Warthog have included realistic damage, allowing you to select exact parts of an enemy for dispersal. Take a shot at someone's arm and it flies back in a manner you'd expect – it can also lead to foes being slammed against walls and slumping in a heap.

There are 11 different weapons to destroy scenery with, and missions in space and on the ground include obliterating massive space stations, stopping rustlers from stealing alien super cattle (*? – Ed*), infiltrating and sabotaging top-secret organisations, and protecting VIP gang bosses. The mixture of the two styles – those where you pilot craft, and those where you blast vital limbs – should distance this from, say, *TS2*.



NGC VERDICT

Actually, despite the amusingly silly story and the fact that Mace Griffin looks like an extra from Tron, there's every chance that this could be good. Some terrific visuals help set the scene, and the weapons – although still being kept under wraps – reportedly top some of *Turok*'s best efforts, especially when used in conjunction with the AI's realistic damage. Quite how successful the mix of flying and shooting will be, we'll have to see, but we're looking forward to this.

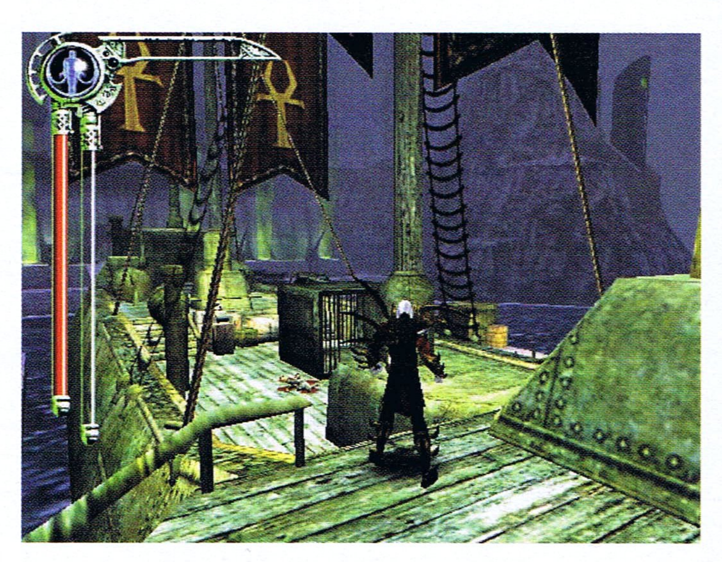
UK 21ST MAR | US SPRING | JAPAN TBA

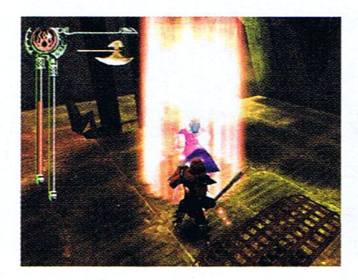
ANTICIPATION RATING

1 2 3 **4** 5

DID YOU KNOW? One of the sets from the movie Aliens was later re-used by curly-haired nutter Tim Burton for the Nicholson-inspired superhero movie, Batman.









BLOOD OMEN 2

Undeadventuring sequel to bite!



Out next month, *Blood Omen 2* is an amusingly gory vampire romp that plays like *Blood Rayne* crossed with *Castlevania*.

Set between the original PlayStation *Legacy of Kain* and its Dreamcast follow-up, *Soul Reaver*, the game follows vampire Kain's quest to regain his kingdom after losing it during a 200-year sleep – one heck of a lie-in by anyone's standards. It features the ability to shroud Kain in mist or float silently from high ledges, so as to sneak up on potential meals. But the best part has to be the move in which Kain grabs somebody by the throat, hoists him into the air, then rams a spiked club where the sun most definitely doesn't shine.

The Cube version runs smoother than the PS2 game it's ported from, and the blood-squirting feeding animation is even juicier now. Lovely.

NGC MOTOR MADNESS!

Van-mad hippy Paul Edwards wants to see a Gamecube port of golden oldie Rally Trophy, which "let you crash old Minis into tree stumps, just like Marc Bolan!" Mentalist.

RALLY CHAMPIONSHIP

Driving fun from those krazy kids at SCi. Includes bonus unlockable 'Shedwards' Golf GTi! Maybe.



The Gamecube's rally game drought is soon to end, despite Activision canning *Rally Fusion* (see **NGC**/73 for a preview). This one from Sci, *Rally Championship*, should fill the gap, though. Excited yet, petrolheads?

Rally Championship is a traditional sort of rally sim, with the usual combination of an arcade mode and a more in-depth career option. Its biggest selling point is the extensive list of cars available – more than any other rally game, apparently. These can be taken for a test drive in the arcade mode, or bought when entering a rally series as a privateer. Choosing the privateer option means you have to manage a budget to keep your car on the road – the aim is to gain enough cash to compete at the top level of rallying with expensive vehicles such as the Ford Focus and Subaru Impreza.

There's a fairly extensive damage model applied to every type of car, so your shiny new Toyota may well end up about a foot shorter after a head-on collision. It's out in February.

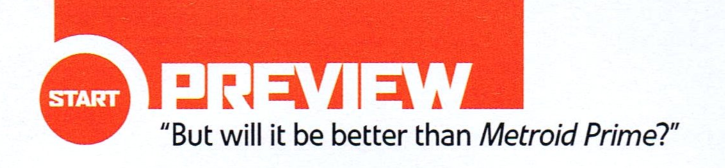






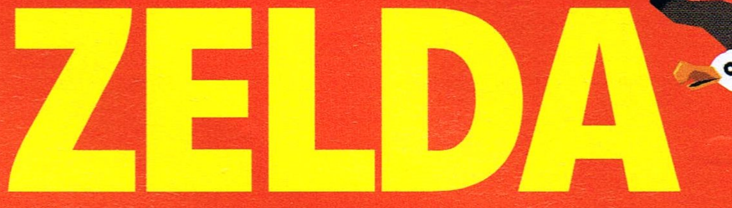






"But will it be better than *Metroid Prime*?"

ZELDA

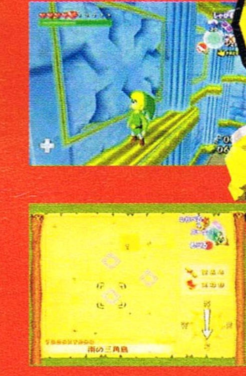


One last look before we review it in the next issue of NGC...

ZELDA REVIEW NEXT MONTH!
It's true! Along with a long, hard look at the astonishing GC port of *Ocarina of Time* and *Ura Zelda*...

NGC EVEN MORE SHOTS!
Will the goodness never end? The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker – as the game is now officially known – just keeps on giving eye-feasts!

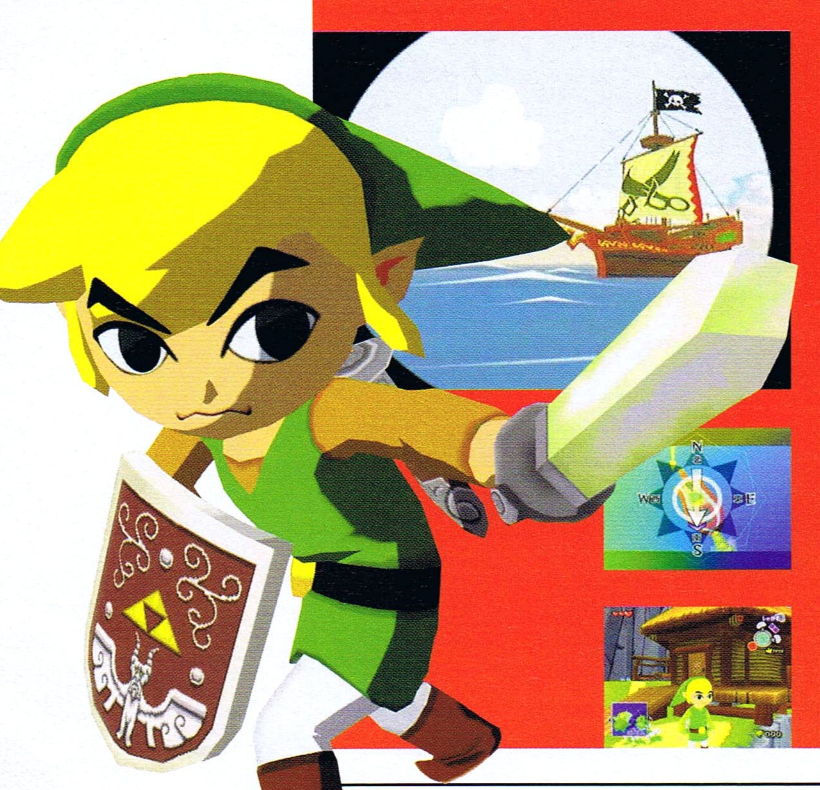
















JACKIE CHAN JENNIFER LOVE HEWITT
HE'S NOT LOOKING FOR TROUBLE...
HE'S WEARING IT.
THE TUXEDO
12A CONTAINS MODERATE VIOLENCE AND LANGUAGE
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VOTE! THE NGC

WHAT TICKLED YOUR FANCY IN 2002? VOTE FOR YOUR



What a year. Gamecube finally launched – and with a plethora of amazing games, too. Almost too many to choose from, and every one a peach (apart from *Universal Studios*, that is. Or *The Scorpion King*. But you get our gist). But which ones did you like best? Which ones kept you from sleep, homework, and significant others? Which ones proved to be the best £40 you ever spent – and the worst? We want to know, and so we invite you to vote for the **NGC** 2002 awards. Simply scribble your nominations in below, cut out the page and send it to us at the address at the bottom of the page (or else photocopy it, if you don't want to ruin your mag).

SEND YOUR NOMINATIONS TO

The **NGC** 2002 Awards
NGC Magazine
Future Publishing
30 Monmouth Street
Bath BA1 2BW
Or email us at
ngc@futurenet.co.uk



BEST NINTENDO GAME



We want your five favourite first– or second–party developed games. This includes *Eternal Darkness* and *Starfox Adventures*, as well as *Mario*, *Smash Bros* and the rest…

1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

BEST THIRD–PARTY GAME



What's your favourite third–party developed (ie, not developed by Nintendo) game? From *Rogue Leader* to *Resident Evil*, there's loads and loads to choose from.

1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

BEST GAMECUBE GAME



Doesn't matter who developed it – we simply want your five favourite Gamecube games overall.

1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

BEST GBA GAME



Send us favourite five GBA games. Was it *Advance Wars*? *Golden Sun*? *Metroid Fusion*? *Yoshi's Island*? Or… something else?

1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

WORST GAME



There have been some stinkers alright – but which five did you particularly resent? And for what reasons? The best comments will be printed in the mag…

1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

MOST WANTED



2003 is going to be an astonishing year for Gamecube. But which five games are you most looking forward to? *Metroid Prime*? *Zelda*? *1080°: Avalanche*? Tell us. Tell us NOW!

1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

BUBBLING UNDER



Some games were less well–received than others. Which five games do you think have been criminally underappreciated?

1 ....
2 ....
3 ....
4 ....
5 ....

MISCELLANEOUS AWARDS



We also want your votes for…

1 BEST VISUALS..
2 BEST SOUND..
3 BEST MULTIPLAYER..
4 BEST GAMEPLAY..
5 MOST PLAYED GAME..

2002 AWARDS

FAVOURITE GAMES NOW!

WHAT TO DO WITH YOUR FREE ADAPTOR DISC

WONDERING WHAT THE FUNNY GREEN DISC THAT CAME WITH THE MAGAZINE IS FOR? WONDER NO MORE!

Ever had a scratched disc? A CD or a game that's been damaged and won't play properly anymore? Well, the GameDR can fix that. It repairs primary disc-related causes of screen freezing, booting problems, skipping and distortion in CDs and other optical media. In conjunction with environmentally-friendly resurfacing fluid, its patented radial-polishing process repairs scratches and cleans fingerprints and other imperfections.

However, the GameDR only takes regular sized discs – hence the adaptor you'll find free with this issue of NGC. It'll allow the GameDR to clean Gamecube discs – and it's worth a whopping £4.99. Blimey, eh? The GameDR itself costs £29.99 – but you can get yourself £5 off the unit with the handy voucher below.

HOW IT WORKS...



1. Pop your free green adaptor onto the black disc-holder shown in the picture, so you can clean your GC discs.



2. Add some lubricating fluid (supplied with the GameDR) to the disc and then snap the whole shebang shut.



3. Crank the handle and clean your disc! You can also reverse the movement of the GameDR for a more thorough effect.

OUR PROMISE

We've spent years securing the biggest and best contacts inside the world's most important companies. Our news is properly sourced, expertly written and thoroughly researched. You can trust what you read here – that's why Newsdesk is the best magazine news service on Planet Earth.

NGC BRINGING YOU NEWS FIRST

NEWSDESK

IN NEWS THIS MONTH

ZELDA OCARINA OF TIME – ON CUBE! P32

GAME BOY PLAYER PLAY GBA GAMES ON THE TELLY P31

POKEMON SALES MADNESS! P33

THE BIG Q 2003 – NINTY'S YEAR? P33

PLUS!
- Most Wanted
- Virtual Reality
- Square and Enix

& MORE!





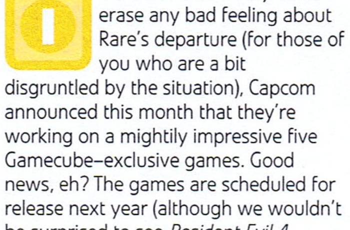
△ *Resident Evil 4* is going to be a thing of complete and utter beauty. Hell yeah.



△ *Killer 7* is a remarkably individual game, aesthetically speaking. Just look at it!

FIVE ALIVE!

CAPCOM GO GAMECUBE CRAZY... BY JES BICKHAM



In a move that surely must erase any bad feeling about Rare's departure (for those of you who are a bit disgruntled by the situation), Capcom announced this month that they're working on a mightily impressive five Gamecube-exclusive games. Good news, eh? The games are scheduled for release next year (although we wouldn't be surprised to see *Resident Evil 4*, which came tagged with a release 'year' of '200X', see the light of day in 2004).

According to Capcom's bigwig producer Shinji Mikami, in an interview with respected Japanese videogames magazine Famitsu, the games are all being created by small teams. It's only established series' of games, or franchises, that can be counted on to make big money, and Capcom's desire to produce more exciting and original games means that certain economic considerations have to be followed. But frankly, this small-scale approach has worked, as these new titles seem to be dizzyingly fresh and interesting – although we're sure *Resident Evil 4* must be a huge project.

To further cement Capcom's refreshingly original stance on game creation, a short statement was posted on their Japanese website, which contained some intriguing comments such as this one:

"In an industry where you create to amuse and entertain, do you sense a crisis about the industry's continuing regression of excitement and stimulation?" And the answer to their own posed question? "We believe that the regression of excitement is solely the fault and responsibility of we creators." Quite.

It's refreshing to see, in the current climate of endless, unexciting franchises, bland sequels and seasonal updates, that a big name company of the stature of Capcom is willing to produce more unusual games – and simultaneously support Gamecube in magnificent and comprehensive fashion.

Here are those games in full, with our comments:

VIEWTIFUL JOE

Despite the terrible name, this side-scrolling fighter looks tremendously exciting. Ostensibly cel-shaded, the game has a more organic, comic-book feel than, say, *Jet Set Radio*, and playing as a superhero allows for some crazy abilities, not least the facility for speeding time up or down, and for Matrix-style combat. Snippets of the footage also showed what appeared to be a *Yoshi's Island*-style targeting system...

Jes Worryingly old-school, but aesthetically quite surprising and visually inventive.

Martin Very promising. The hero's catchphrase made me cringe, though: "That was... viewtiful!"

Geraint I really love this kind of thing. Visually quirky with what looks like an refreshing, innovative take on retro side-scrolling battling.

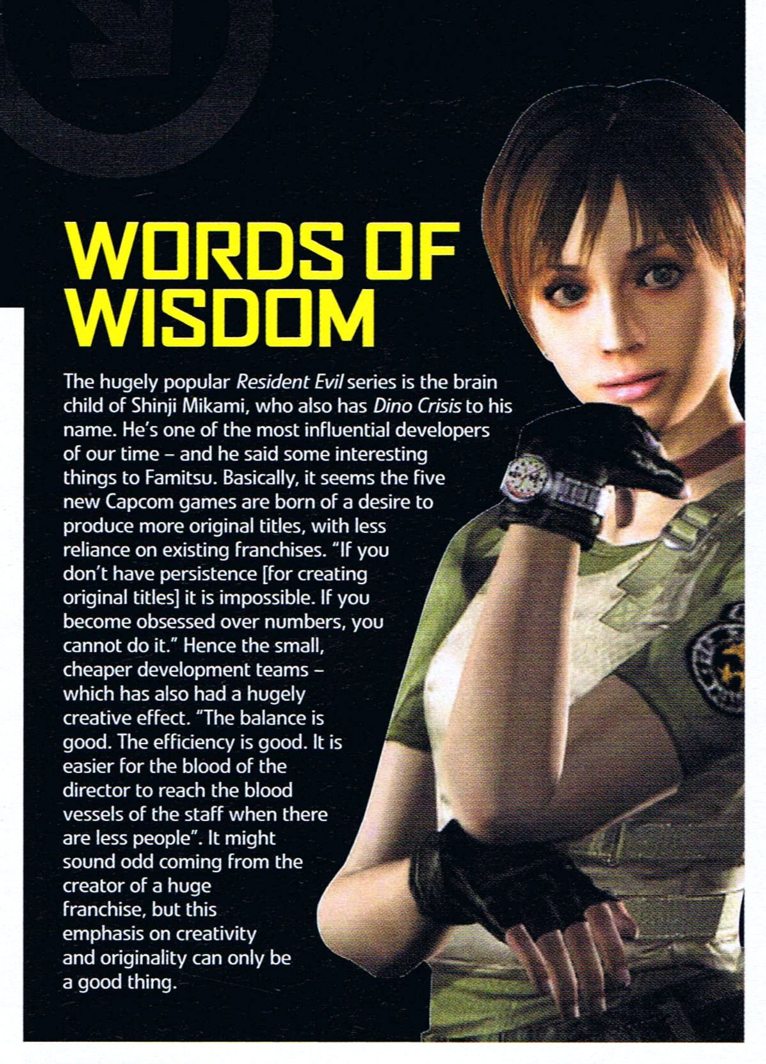


STOP PRESS

IMPORTERS UNITE!
Do you own a Japanese or an American Gamecube? Do you get all the latest games as they're released in other territories? If so, we want to know what you think of those latest games. For instance, Metroid Prime – were you as blown away by it as we were? Let us know your thoughts at the usual email address or by more simple methods, such as a letter.

NEWS MONKEYS, TO ME! This month's news was compiled and written by Jes Bickham, Martin Kitts and Geraint Evans. Hovering unhygienically in the background is Dan Geary, a man so Irish he spits Guinness and bleeds pure, earthy peat.

WORDS OF WISDOM



The hugely popular *Resident Evil* series is the brain child of Shinji Mikami, who also has *Dino Crisis* to his name. He's one of the most influential developers of our time – and he said some interesting things to Famitsu. Basically, it seems the five new Capcom games are born of a desire to produce more original titles, with less reliance on existing franchises. "If you don't have persistence [for creating original titles] it is impossible. If you become obsessed over numbers, you cannot do it." Hence the small, cheaper development teams – which has also had a hugely creative effect. "The balance is good. The efficiency is good. It is easier for the blood of the director to reach the blood vessels of the staff when there are less people". It might sound odd coming from the creator of a huge franchise, but this emphasis on creativity and originality can only be a good thing.

DEAD PHOENIX

Shades of *Devil May Cry* in the non-stop action on offer here. However, you get to fly freely around the skies and control up to 100 ground troops, against similarly numerically-vast opponents. Not the best looking of the five, with some fogging and a certain amount of pop-up, but action-packed nonetheless.

Jes Nice to see a game throwing lots of things around on-screen. Whacking great bosses, too.

Martin *Panzer Dragoon* crossed with *Clone Wars*, perhaps?

Geraint *Panzer Dragoon*, indeed. It's a real shame *Orta* isn't coming to the Gamecube – so this may well be a decent alternative.

> **"KILLER 7 IS THE MOST BIZARRE OF THE FIVE BUT IT OFFERS THE MOST INTRIGUING POSSIBILITIES"**

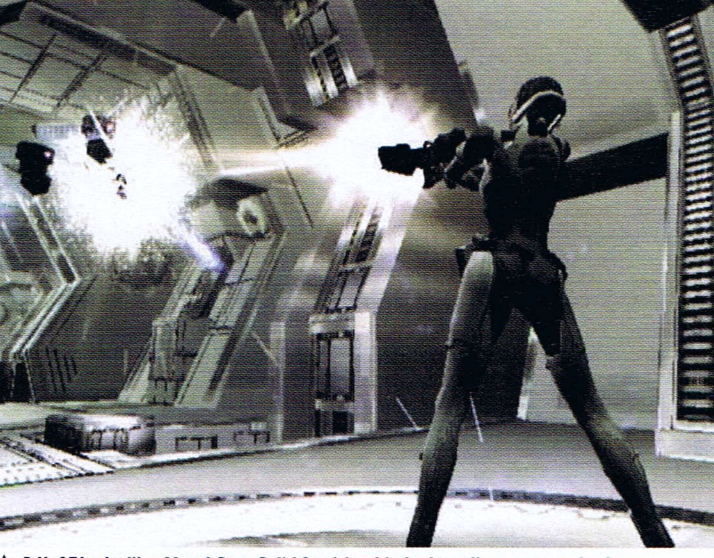
KILLER 7

An amazing saturated-light look, and another twist on cel-shading. As a wheelchair-bound assassin with seven separate personalities (codenamed 'God Killer') this is the most bizarre of the five, but offers the most intriguing narrative possibilities, as you've got to utilise all facets of your character to hunt down a rival assassin, 'God Hands'. It's impossible to predict how it will play from the trailer, though.

Jes *Dead Phoenix* aside, all the games showcased here have taken great pains to look fundamentally 'different' – and this is the most individual.

Martin Mmm, this is viewtiful. Sorry, wrong game!

Geraint Very, very stylish with some great art direction. Shame there wasn't anything that looked like gameplay footage, though.



△ *P.N. 03* looks like *Metal Gear Solid 2*, with added adrenaline, guns and robots.

P.N. 03

Or *Project Number 3*. Fast-paced action again, in a stylised, clinical environment that echoes the style of *Metal Gear Solid 2* on PlayStation 2. The most viscerally appealing of the bunch, with plenty of giant weapons, somersaulting and acrobatic action.

Jes Yet more emphasis on 'twitch gaming', but it looks astounding.

Martin It's like Treasure's obscure-but-brilliant N64 game *Sin & Punishment*, with better graphics.

Geraint Absolutely stunning. With Shinji Mikami at the helm of this one, we can certainly expect something rather special indeed.

RESIDENT EVIL 4

This, of course, is the biggie, and no mistake. Apparently this is modelled in 'proper' 3D, discarding the pre-rendered backgrounds of all the series' previous incarnations, and the tone is remarkably different; no zombies featured, but rather a swirling, flowing black mass is seen enveloping the game's main character Leon Kennedy. The words 'infection' and 'progenitor virus' feature very heavily…

Jes *Resident Evil*, amazingly, just got even *more* atmospheric – and mysterious. Decent controls this time, though, please…

Martin Hard to believe it isn't pre-rendered, like the current games. Very detailed, very spooky.

Geraint I'm getting a little tired of *Resident Evil* to be honest – but this looks absolutely incredible. Hopefully it's the start of a completely new direction for the series.



△ *Killer 7*: We really don't know what to expect, but it looks astonishing. Really.



△ *Dead Phoenix*: *Devil May Cry*-style thrills with added flying and soldiers.



△ *P.N. 03*: kinetic action blasting a-plenty. It'll test your reflexes alright.



△ *Viewtiful Joe*: crazy side-scrolling pseudo-3D super-heroic action. Crazy!

SHORT CUTS



RALLY RUINED

We previewed it back in issue 73, where it was looking quite promising, but Activision's *Rally Fusion* has been sadly canned. It is no more. It is an ex-rally game. Although the game was expected to ship shortly in the US, Activision issued this statement: "*Rally Fusion: Race of Champions* will not be appearing on a Nintendo platform as originally planned. Due to unforeseen problems in development the release date has slipped beyond the Christmas period and we are no longer able to schedule its expected release date. As a result, the decision has been taken not to proceed any further with the project."



LOTUS ALIVE!

In other racing game news, Xicat Interactive this month announced that they're bringing *Lotus Challenge* to Gamecube. Fairly well-received on PS2, the game offers a story mode that sees you indulging in stunts, missions and challenges as well as straight racing championships. There's also a full damage model and a unique control system that utilises the analogue stick in an unusual way. Expect more on the game soon.

MAP DANCING
Clever pun, eh? No, not really. Sorry. Anyway, any budding Timesplitters 2 mapmakers – after reading our feature on creating GoldenEye maps in the game, of course – should head over to www.eidosinteractive.com for some more official help. Eidos have set up their own website for mapmaking, which will expand as time passes to include tips for all sorts of maps.

PHANTASTIC!
This month, Sega released a new bug-free version of Phantasy Star Online in Japan – existing owners are able to trade their copy of the game for the new one. Neato.



DISAGREE WITH MOST WANTED? Then email us at **ngc@futurenet.co.uk** or write to us at **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath, BA1 2BW and tell us the three games you're most looking forward to. Every month, we'll tally up the scores on the doors and change the list accordingly.



The 25 games you've been eagerly rubbing your thighs over for the last 30 days...



THIS MONTH

Put on your brown trousers, grab yourself a drool bucket, and flip to page 36 for our huge review of what has turned out to be arguably the best game published by Nintendo since *Ocarina of Time*. And it was made in America, not Japan. We never realised the Yanks had it in them...



1 THE LEGEND OF ZELDA

UK TBA | US SPRING | JAPAN NOW

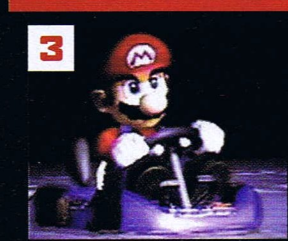
Already playing it on Japanese import? Did you get your bonus disc with *Ocarina of Time* and *Ura Zelda* on it? The rest of the world will have to wait just a little bit longer for this one, especially us backwater Euro types, so let's hope it's an event worth waiting for. After Christmas, let us know how long it took you to finish the whole thing (if you did).



2 METROID PRIME

UK MARCH | US NOW | JAPAN JANUARY

A little bit special, this one. We've got a few months to go before we get hold of the UK version, but Nintendo's PAL conversions are extremely good these days, so it goes without saying that we'll get higher resolution and a 60Hz mode to replace the US progressive scan option. Nice work.



3 MARIO KART GC

UK 2003/04 | US 2003/04 | JAPAN 2003/04

The timeless appeal of chucking red shells and bananas at your karting buddies ensures *Mario Kart* retains its status as one of the UK's three most anticipated Gamecube titles. In the light of the *Zelda* giveaway, maybe Nintendo will throw in every other version of *Mario Kart* for free. Ho ho.



4 F-ZERO GC

UK 2003 | US 2003 | JAPAN 2003

If you're feeling the need for speed (and we're talking in a Tom Cruise sense here, not the trundling EA sports car game), look no further. We've no doubt that Sega's supersonic interpretation of the classic N64 hover-racer is going to be the business on Gamecube – and in the arcades!



5 RESIDENT EVIL ZERO

UK SPRING | US NOW | JAPAN NOW

It's back to the source for the definitive survival horror series, as we learn more about the origin of all those brain-chomping freaks and other hideous genetic mutations. It's like a typical Friday night out in Bath, except with more guns and not quite so many glassy-eyed zombies roaming the streets.



6 MARIO TENNIS

UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

The outstanding N64 version somehow managed to be the most playable, skillful tennis game we've ever seen, despite using just two buttons for a control system that left the technical basics entirely up to the computer. A repeat performance would be most welcome. An improvement – unimaginable.



7 ANIMAL CROSSING

UK TBA | US NOW | JAPAN NOW

Make friends with the dangerous Wart Jr, design bandanas of dubious moral character, and hack down your friend's fruit trees for profit. Alternatively, trade items nicely, leave buried treasure for other members of your family to find, and become a model animal citizen.



8 1080°: AVALANCHE

UK 2003 | US 2003 | JAPAN 2003

Thank goodness they didn't call it *White Storm*, to follow *Wave Race: Blue Storm*. Then we would have had the horrifying prospect of a future *Excitebike* update being called *Brown Storm*, which really doesn't bear thinking about. *1080°: Avalanche* avoids setting a precedent of badness.



9 SOUL CALIBUR 2

UK TBA | US TBA | JAPAN TBA

A-hacking and a-chopping and a-kicking and a-punching... That's the basic concept anyway, and Namco's *Soul Calibur 2* is one of the finest examples of its type. There's a great deal of subtlety in the way that it's possible to parry moves and launch swift counter-attacks. No grisly fatalities, though.



#	Game	UK	US	JAPAN
10	**PHANTASY STAR ONLINE** – Online adventuring and chatting.	TBA	NOW	NOW
11	**STARFOX ARMADA** – Namco's Foxy arcade shooter.	2003	2003	2003
12	**FINAL FANTASY** – The Chronicle of the old Crystals.	2003	2003	2003
13	**MARIO GOLF** – Mazza gets busy with a nine-iron.	2003	2003	2003
14	**XIII** – Cel-shaded first-person shooter..	2003	2003	TBA
15	**HARVEST MOON** – Mmmm, Harvesty.	TBA	SPRING	DEC
16	**MORTAL KOMBAT** – Finish him! Aww, go on. Finish him.	2003	2003	UNLIKELY
17	**RAYMAN 3** – No arms, plenty of platforms.	MARCH	MARCH	TBA
18	**STARCRAFT GHOST** – *MGS*-ish third-person shooter.	2003	2003	2003
19	**IKARUGA** – Awesome shooter from Treasure.	2003	2003	JAN
20	**DRIVER 3** – Top-secret car theft and crime..	2003	2003	TBA
21	**PRO EVO SOCCER 2** – FIFA-thumping Konami footie sim.	TBA	TBA	2003
22	**CONFLICT: DESERT STORM** – Fun with guns in the desert.	2003	FEB	TBA
23	**BROKEN SWORD 3** – Adventure and intrigue. Yep.	2003	2003	2003
24	**DRAGON'S LAIR 3D** – Long-awaited retro update.	2003	2003	UNLIKELY
25	**ONIMUSHA 3** – Unconfirmed Capcom threequel.	TBA	TBA	TBA

WRITE TO... MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK



DID YOU KNOW? *Metroid Prime* developers Retro Studios are based in Austin, Texas. The company's boss was also the founder of that other famous Austin developer, Iguana. Their next projects may include one of the three games put on hold for *Metroid*: *Raven Blade*, *Thunder Rally* or *Retro Football*.



BOY SELECTA!

The Super Game Boy returns, in spirit, with the new GBA-Gamecube adaptor.

Tired of squinting at that small, dark Game Boy Advance screen? Next year your eye-strain troubles will be eased by the Game Boy Player, an add-on that turns the mighty Gamecube into a humble GBA.

The Game Boy Player is a chunky slab of plastic that fits into the hi-speed port underneath the Gamecube. Plug a GBA game into the cartridge slot at the front and you can play it on the TV, with a selection of different resolution options for scaling the low-res GBA display to fit the high-res Gamecube screen.

Games can be played using a real GBA connected via a link cable, or through a Gamecube controller. A GBA system link port is also included, to allow four-player link-up games – although only one player can use the TV, with the other three having to make do with the usual GBA screens.

Similar devices have been released for the SNES and N64 in the past. On the N64, it was possible to play *Pokémon* using a Transfer Pak and the *Pokémon Stadium* cartridge, while the SNES had two Super Game Boy adaptors – the second of which included a system link port, but never got around to a release in this country.

Nintendo claim that this 'indirectly' boosts the Gamecube's software library to a huge size. Managing Director David Gosen enthused: "With over 1,000 portable games to choose from, for the first time you can play classic titles like *Tetris* or the brand-new *Metroid Fusion* at home on your TV screen."

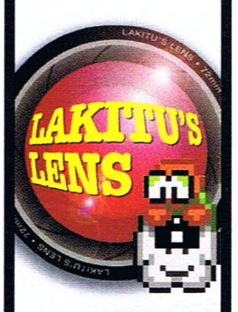
Herr Gosen may be unaware that it has been many years since the vast majority of those 1,000 titles, including the original 1989 *Tetris*, were last seen on software store shelves. But anyway, it's a cool piece of hardware, and as long as it's released at a reasonable price (the Super Game Boy actually cost more than a real Game Boy at the time), we can see it doing good business. Especially with *Pokémon Ruby* and *Sapphire* on the way (see above right).

Now that, as they might say at Nintendo, is totally gangbusters.




△ Just think – your Gamecube will soon play host to over 1,000 titles like this.

DID YOU KNOW? The extra height added by the Game Boy Player will make the Gamecube an almost perfect cube shape. At the moment, it's a bit squashed, see? Amazing.



SPOTTED PEACH ON READY, STEADY COOK? SEEN TUROK BEATING UP A PENSIONER IN THE BILL? LET LAKITU KNOW!




ANGEL EYES

Duane Pearson from Exeter was watching Dark Angel when he spotted the shady character Eyes Only dispensing an 'Atomic Purple' Game Boy Color. "I got this for your kid," says Mr Only. "They're hard to find these days." Are they really? Duane also enclosed a video of his lady-friend Andrea demonstrating some 'mad skillz' on *Super Monkey Ball*. Lakitu says, "Nice work, ma'am."

WRITE TO LAKITU'S LENS, NGC, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW

Entries sent with picture evidence will win a Gamecube game




△ Ker-ching! The sweet smell of money.



△ Looks cute, but it's a real monster.

PACK 'EM IN

Pikachu still doing the business for Nintendo

The first GBA instalments of the mega-selling RPG series, *Ruby* and *Sapphire*, are well on the way to maintaining the *Pokémon* tradition of extraordinary success in Japan.

Nintendo shifted over 1.3 million copies in the first week of release. *Ruby* lead the way with sales of 700,000. To put that in perspective, it's more than *Mario Sunshine* has sold in Japan since its launch last summer. More than double, if you include both colours.

The revived *Pokémon* craze has also triggered a 300 per cent increase in GBA hardware sales, with the knock-on effect of a similar rise in Gamecube sales.

VIRTUAL REALITY

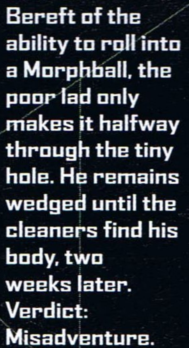
NINTENDO GAMING MOMENTS 'COME TRUE'.



THIS MONTH Metroid-hunting through the tiniest of tunnels...

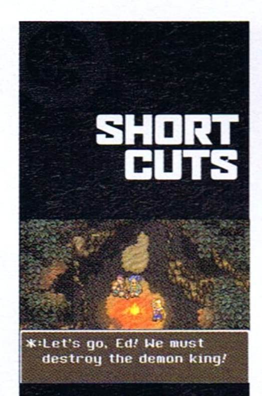


THE TEST Armed with a home-made blaster and a Welshman's eye for a concealed entrance, our leek-munching Samus scans a likely opening. "Here be Metroids," he declares confidently.

RESULT Bereft of the ability to roll into a Morphball, the poor lad only makes it halfway through the tiny hole. He remains wedged until the cleaners find his body, two weeks later. Verdict: Misadventure.

SHORT CUTS



ENIX: SQUARED

Square and Enix, the worlds two biggest RPG developers, have merged to form what can only be described as a deadly alliance. Well okay, maybe not deadly, but their combined RPG prowess will no doubt dominate Japan's role-players until the very end of time. Enix is responsible for the *Dragon Quest* series – arguably the most successful RPG ever – while Square create the *Final Fantasy* series. The merger was made to combat rising development costs while allowing the companies to become more aggressive.



STRIKE A LIGHT

It seems the mastermind behind *Metal Gear Solid* is turning his hand to some new tricks. This innovative new GBA game, entitled *Into the Sun*, will use special sensors that pick up the levels of light in your surrounding environment to affect events that happen in the game. Very intriguing stuff, but exact details as to how it all works have yet to be divulged by Kojima. Interesting. *Very* interesting…



△ Ahhhh, the memories. Just hearing the sweet, sweet music is enough to bring a tear to our eyes…



△ While there is some stuttering in the frame-rate during sequences like this, it's still vastly improved.



△ All the details from the opening are just as they were before, albeit in slightly higher resolution…

NINTENDO'S LINK TO THE PAST

Zelda: Ocarina of Time and *Ura Zelda* released in Japan… completely free… Mother!

If ever you needed proof that Japanese gamers get all the best stuff then this is about as good as it gets. As part of Nintendo's pre-order campaign for the forthcoming *Legend of Zelda* on Gamecube, the first 100,000 gamers to get their order in were lucky enough to receive early copies of the Gamecube port of *Ocarina of Time*, as well as the never-before-seen *Ura Zelda* (a slightly tweaked and reworked version of *OOT*) absolutely free. Also squeezed on the disc were demos (rolling footage ones, mind) of the blisteringly fast *F-Zero GC* and the gorgeous *Biohazard 4, Killer 7, Dead Phoenix, Viewtiful Joe* and *Project 03* (see page 31 for more on those).

Ocarina of Time may be a straight port of the N64 original, but it's safe to say the visuals are somewhat improved. There are no new textures, added polygons or anything like that, but the resolution is much sharper and the frame-rate is smoother and more consistent than it ever was on the N64.

Ura Zelda is the second playable game. It's the version of *OOT* that was due for release on the 64DD – but never quite made it out due to that add-ons demise. Visually, it's pretty much the same as *OOT*, with the main differences manifesting themselves in gameplay elements. Some of the dungeon puzzles have been revised, a few enemies are now tougher than before, while some – like Ghoma's hatchlings – now appear outside the boss area.

All in all, a fantastic release – you can't grumble if it's free, can you? For those unlucky enough to miss out on the early send-out of the disc, the games will be included with *Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker* when it's released this month. Still no announcement about whether we'll get the same treatment over here, though…

Unfortunately, our own copy of the game arrived a little too late for our screens to go to print, so thanks to Tokyopia for the screenshots. We'll have full details and comparisons on this in time for next month.



△ Much of the game's age shows in close-ups of the characters' details…



△ Faces and hands seem somewhat 'chunky' compared to newer games…



△ …but then who cares, this is still as magical now as it ever was. Beautiful.



SEGA SPOIL SPORTS
Sega are stop producing their 'Sports' titles for Gamecube. The best of these have, over recent years been their '2K' series of games, so the likes of Beach Spikers and Virtua Striker from AM2 will no doubt still appear. You'll just have to do without NFL and NBA simulations. If you can possibly bear the pain…

AUSSIE DEAL
Electronic Arts have announced that they're slashing the price of their games in Australia during the run-up to christmas. If you're desperate for PAL EA games, check the net for any cheap deals…

2003: WILL THIS BE THE YEAR OF NINTENDO?



△ *Metroid* heralds a new wave of stunning Gamecube software aimed at older gamers worldwide…



△ *Crystal Chronicles* will be the first game released after the Square/Nintendo buried hatchet.



△ *Zelda* pre-orders made it abundantly clear how much the gaming public were looking forward to it…

You wouldn't think it if you saw the appealing bundles from the competition. An Xbox with five high-quality titles for £200. A PS2 and seven games available for roughly the same price. Meanwhile, Nintendo of Europe continue to refuse to drop their prices (or at the very least create attractive bundles). They still lack focus in their marketing, are generally floundering sales-wise, and the absence of any big Christmas titles is somewhat depressing. Hardly encouraging for the new year, is it?

But all's not lost. Europe aside, there's a genuine buzz about Nintendo's plans for the New Year. Over the last month in the US and Japan, Nintendo have been surprisingly aggressive. A huge marketing spend on the excellent *Metroid Prime* goaded a quarter-of-a-million gamers to pick up a copy over its first week on sale. This, combined with the presence of *Resident Evil 0* has (at the time of writing) placed Gamecube ahead of the Xbox in terms of weekly sales – no small achievement in the USA. Likewise, Japan has seen a dramatic upturn in Gamecube's fortunes. In the run-up to the festive season, Gamecube was clocking in at a mere 1,000 units behind PS2 – something we'd never have though possible – until now.

EASTERN PROMISE

Something, then, is definitely 'up' – and the momentum looks set to continue well into 2003. *Pokémon* for example (a brand that people thought would be dead by now) sold a staggering 1.3 million units in its opening week – but that's not all that's driving sales. Link's gorgeous new adventure will have already hit store shelves by the time you read this, bundled with *Ocarina of Time* and the never-before-seen *Ura Zelda*. No prizes for guessing what Japanese gamers will be playing well into 2003…

Of course, *Zelda* won't last forever. Nintendo need to keep driving forward in order to capitalise on their current good form. While hardly ground-breaking, the announcement of a GBA player for the Gamecube is a nice addition to their range of products, and may prove tempting to the legions of people who already own a GBA as well as providing an alternative to those who don't. What's more, knowing Nintendo, that slab of 'GBA-playing' plastic, will doubtless have more functions than we're currently giving it credit for…

TO THE FUTURE… AND BEYOND!

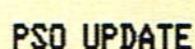
It's certainly been a strange year for Nintendo. While their partnership with Rare has been dissolved, Nintendo look to have come out of it for the better. Raking in a substantial wedge of cash (which can be spent on more prolific and quirky Japanese dev-companies), Nintendo have continued their pursuit of bigger and better ties with Japan's respected developers. This new spirit of partnership with old adversaries will usher in a staggering amount of new high-quality content. Next spring will see the fruits of Nintendo's liaison with Square, in the form of the eagerly anticipated *Final Fantasy: Crystal Chronicles*. Namco and Sega are busy working on *Starfox Armada* and *F-Zero* respectively, while Capcom have pledged five exclusive new titles for Gamecube to be released between now and 2004.

Old-man Yamauchi must be happy…



HOT PROPERTY

Traditionally, and looking at all territories simultaneously, it's been *Mario* that has helped Nintendo boost their console sales, especially in the past. Unfortunately, while *Mario Sunshine* sold well, it hardly made Gamecube sales skyrocket. In actual fact, *Super Smash Bros Melee* had a far bigger impact on Gamecube sales when it was first released. Mario does seem to have lost some of his appeal – especially to younger gamers who have not necessarily been brought up with him. The N64 saw evidence of this – with *GoldenEye* being the most wanted game in the West, while the likes of *Pokémon* and *Zelda* cleaned up the world over. It seems that *Metroid* and *Zelda* (out of all the titles for the New Year) may well turn out to be Gamecube's saviour.



PSO UPDATE

Sega have announced that they will release (it should be out by the time you read this, actually) an updated version of Phantasy Star Online in Japan that's free of the item-duplication glitch. Any players with a copy of the game can send it back along with their receipt – they'll get a free patched copy of the game sent back. Players will still be able to retain their character, stats and levels, although any money and items collected will be lost in the switch to the new version. What a bummer, man…



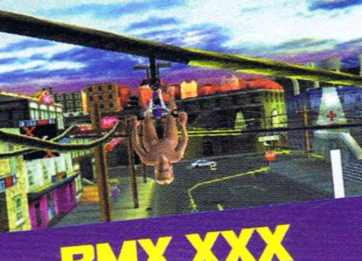


OUR PROMISE

Our reviewers are the most talented and knowledgeable Nintendo fans in the business. We don't only play games at work – we play them at home too, just like you. We ensure that we've played games through to the end so that we can give you a proper verdict – and one that saves you from wasting money.



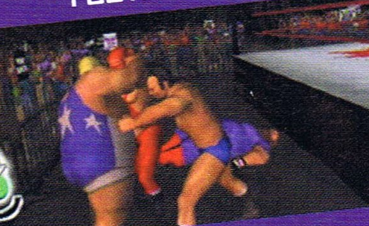
IN REVIEWS THIS MONTH



BMX XXX
SWEARY BIKE-RIDING "FUN", IF THAT FLOATS YOUR BOAT... P69



DISNEY FOOTBALL
THE NOBLE ART OF FOOTSIE-BALL! P68



P60 TY TIGER
P65 LEGENDS OF WRESTLING II
P64 BOMBERMAN
P67 SUM OF ALL...
P70 GBA REVIEWS ROUND-UP

WHAT IS PAL?

PAL is the UK's broadcasting standard. When you buy a Cube here it will be PAL. When you buy a Cube in the US or Japan it'll be NTSC – a different broadcasting standard, and the reason the two don't mix. Import games are NTSC games.



METROID PRIME

Brace yourselves – *Metroid*'s here and it's astonishing. Fact! P36





RESIDENT EVIL ZERO

The terrifying survival horror prequel hits America. Prepare for guts! P48



METROID FUSION

The best GBA game you can buy? It might just be. Read on and see! P46



HARRY POTTER

Boy-wizard Potter gets medieval on basilisk ass. Or something. P58

HOW IT WORKS...

Our reviews are the biggest, most comprehensive on Planet Earth. We devote more pages to the games you want to know about, and give you more detail than anyone else. And in the new **NGC** things have just got a whole lot better: our Field of Play and Event-o-meter regulars will pinpoint exactly when and where games get good, and yet our verdicts remain the most honest and most stringent around.



SONIC MEGA COLLECTION

Retro action just the way Geraint likes it. He's stuck in 1993, you know… **P74**



REIGN OF FIRE

The game of the film reaches Gamecube at last. Worth the wait? Or not? **P62**

1 GET INTO THE GAME

The quickest and smartest way to get started…



2 FIELD OF PLAY



The game's best bit taken apart and analysed…



3 EVENT-O-METER



The good bits, the bad bits – all in a handy graph…



4 THE SCORE BAR

The verdict explained for you…

PROS AND CONS
Because we think it's important to provide you with balanced reviews, we'll sum up the game simply with plus and minus points.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Not all games are good (unsurprisingly) – so you'll be wanting to know what the alternative is. We'll provide suggestions here.

VISUALS AND SOUNDS
Gamecube sends PS2 packing. Do the visuals and sounds show this?

MASTERY
How well does the game make use of the Cube's startling hardware?

LIFESPAN
Will it last you a lifetime or a couple of minutes? Here you'll find out for sure…

VERDICT
We don't throw scores around – we give a game what it deserves. Here you will find the definitive verdict on whether you should purchase a game.



+
- Great graphics.
- Wonderful sound.
- One of the best games we've ever played.

–
- Doesn't last too long.
- Not much in the way of replay value.
- Once it's over, you'll cry.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Mario Party
Nintendo
NGC/75 68%
Not as good as *MP2*, but still plenty of fun for four players.



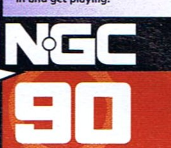
8 VISUALS
Cutting-edge graphics engine and some spectacular effects. Your eyes will be grateful.

9 SOUNDS
Truly astonishing surround sound – like you're actually in the game. Magnificent.

9 MASTERY
Every inch of the Gamecube's innards is pushed to the max, creating a masterpiece.

6 LIFESPAN
The low point; perfectly formed but lacking in longevity. Still, you'll love it while it lasts.

VERDICT
A textbook example of involving a player to the exclusion of all else; innovative, immersive, and plainly just top quality. Get it in and get playing.



5 OUR SCORING SYSTEM

What those scores mean to you…

NGC STAR GAME

0-24	25-49	50-74	75-89	90+
Crushingly awful, massively dull. Rest assured, this is crud.	Disappointing, stashed with faults and likely to be short of any quality.	Some great bits, some not-so-great bits. Decent but definitely problems.	Great fun, brilliantly programmed at times, but probably flawed.	Rarely awarded, you'll know a 90+ is absolutely essential.

Flesh-twisting: Baron von Bickham.

MEET THE NGC TEAM

The beautiful *Metroid Prime* made the **NGC** team want to do some exploring of their own…



JES
Having explored the dark arts of Necromancy, foolish Jes resurrected himself as a zombie. "Brains", he said.



JUD
As hideous as he is most of the time, Jud's probing of a Glock left him more facially-wounded than usual. "Mmph", he dribbled.



KITTFACE
"I've explored every inch of the human body", whispered Martin. "With a variety of knives." Good grief, man! "Quite."



GERAINT
"There is no area of what you call 'love' that I cannot plumb," explained Geraint. "Except, y'know, kissing and that."



PAUL
Off to surf the vastness of the ocean, Paul fell at the first hurdle and was trapped in a sewer outlet at Clacton.



DAN
"Oh, I can't be doing with all that, loves. Just give us a kiss, eh? Etcetera etcetera."



HALL
Being of a northern persuasion, Lee set off to penetrate deepest Yorkshire. "Ee, reet gran oop North" was all we could decipher.



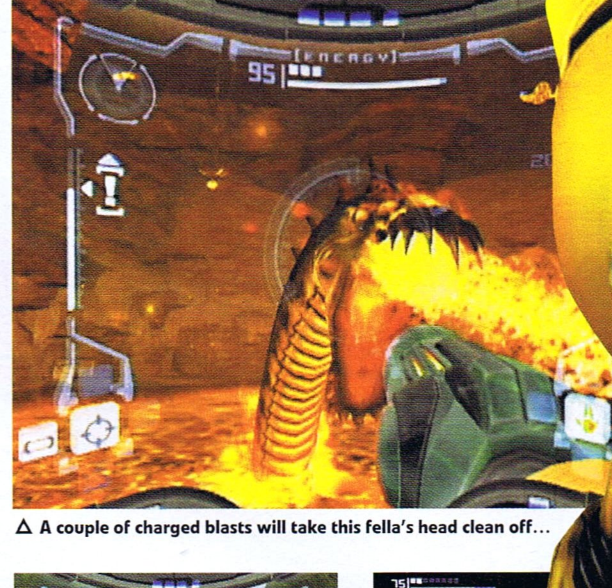
LAURA
"I have examined the very furthest reaches of human hair", said follicle scientist Laura. "Soon my barnet will envelop the world!"



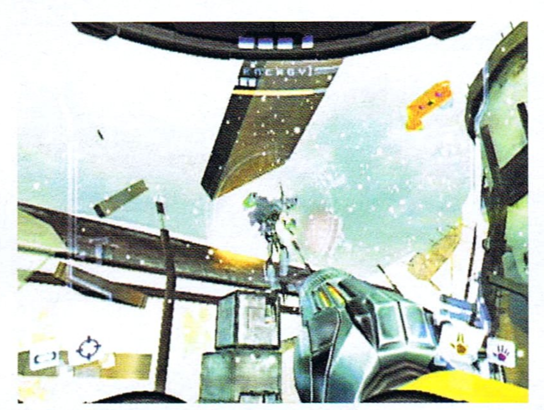
BUMPKIN
Tim had big plans for exploring the Somerset countryside, but was distracted by a pretty bird. "Oo-arr! Oo-arr! Oo-arr!", he hooted.



△ Land a hit on these Pirates' jet-packs to defeat them fast.



△ A couple of charged blasts will take this fella's head clean off…



△ One criticism we will level at *Metroid* is that the respawning enemies can be something of a chore.





△ It might look a long way up, but Samus' forgiving jump makes things much easier.



DEVELOPER	RETRO STUDIOS
PUBLISHER	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	YES
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Canny importers can enjoy *Metroid* now – it's March for PAL plebs, though.

COST: $50 (£35)

METROID PRIME

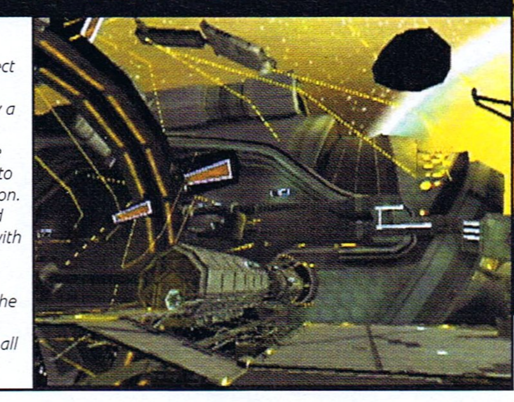
NGC STAR GAME

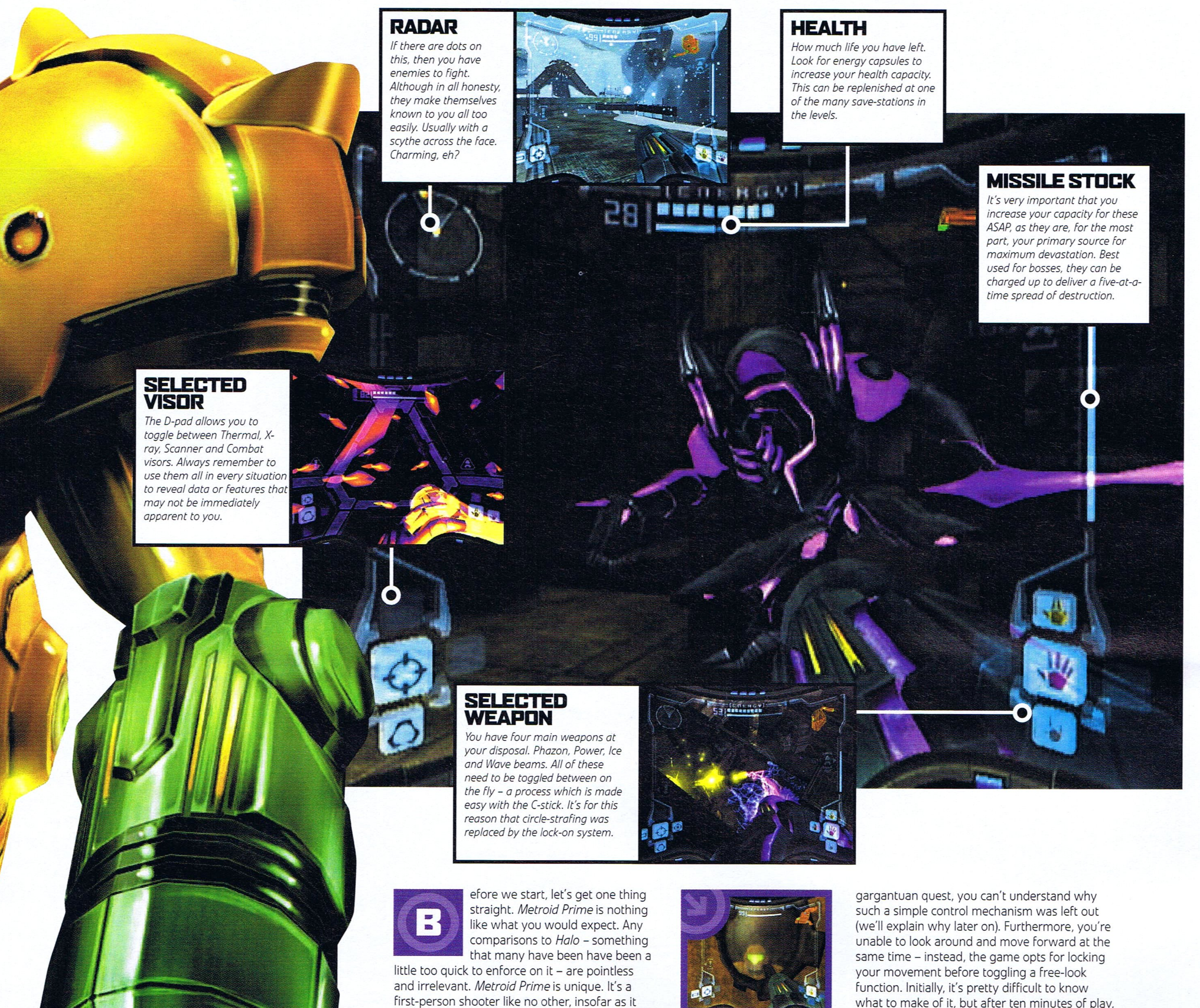
An astonishing example of Gamecube's power, *Metroid Prime* is all you've been waiting for. And much more…

GET INTO THE GAME
Easing you through the opening stages of the game…

DOCKING

There really is only one option. Select New Game and start playing. The opening space station level is really a tutorial to ease you into things. There's loads of stuff to scan in the early stages, helping you get used to the importance of using this function. While the assorted enemies around the place help you to get to grips with the basics of fighting and dashing. The final boss in this section is particularly impressive – however, he also heralds the beginning of you being stripped of your abilities. It's all downhill for Samus after this…





Before we start, let's get one thing straight. *Metroid Prime* is nothing like what you would expect. Any comparisons to *Halo* – something that many have been have been a little too quick to enforce on it – are pointless and irrelevant. *Metroid Prime* is unique. It's a first-person shooter like no other, insofar as it *isn't* really a first-person shooter. To pigeonhole it as one is both unfair, and – more to the point – simply unjustified because of the game's ground-breaking features.

If you've been playing *Timesplitters 2*, *Turok* or *Nightfire* over the past months – and we suspect you've probably at least had a go at one of them – *Metroid Prime* will feel somewhat bizarre under the thumb. To start with, you can't freely circle-strafe. The absence of this function after playing the likes of *GoldenEye* feels unnatural, and in the early portion of this gargantuan quest, you can't understand why such a simple control mechanism was left out (we'll explain why later on). Furthermore, you're unable to look around and move forward at the same time – instead, the game opts for locking your movement before toggling a free-look function. Initially, it's pretty difficult to know what to make of it, but after ten minutes of play, any concerns with the control method soon dwindle and you find yourself completely and helplessly immersed.

The game begins at an orbital station around Tallon IV, where Samus Aran's ship touches down at the docking bay. After a dazzling mini-introductory sequence, the camera zooms in behind her head and you're placed inside the visor. This is same view that, when out of your morphball, you'll be staring through for about 80 per cent of the game. Manoeuvring Samus through the

DETAILS, DETAILS

It's always the little things – like these decorative little mirrors – that help make a game. There are plenty of other smart touches too. Shooting the birds in the Chozo ruins, the sound of your footsteps as you walk, rain gently bouncing off your cannon, the whirring of your armour's servos. Delightful…

LOOKING GOOD KILLING GOOD

PRACTICAL BOUNTY-HUNTING FOR LADIES

We've all been there, haven't we? One minute you're perusing your local deep-space outpost, the next, you're slaughtering wildlife and burning the face off space pirates with the butt of your fully-charged arm-cannon. Guest columnist Samus Aran, just back from Tallon IV, shares her thoughts on the year's essential accessories with some personally recommended applications…

Morphball

If you've not been dieting then we suggest you give this one a miss, girls. Squeezing in anyone from a size 12 to a tiny size seven, this orb is available in a variety of styles…



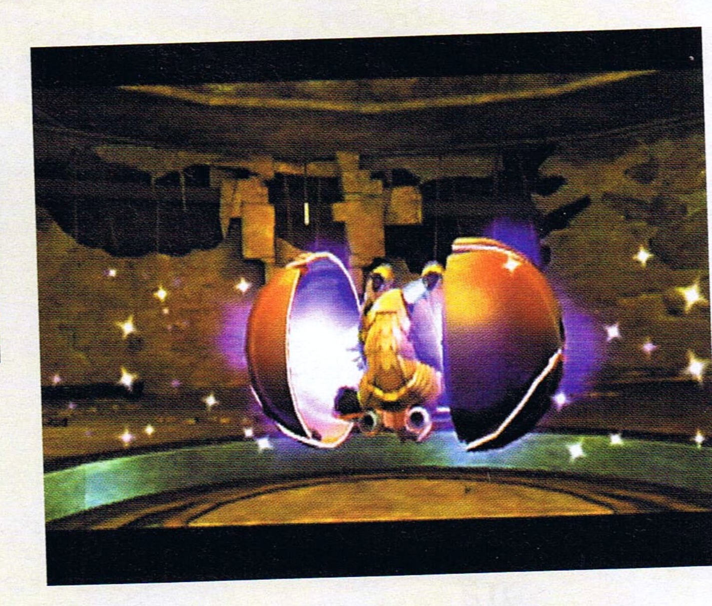
SPIDERBALL
For the modern woman who values the freedom to travel like an arachnid. This upgrade allows you to scale walls. Here's a shot of me, crossing a scorching lava lake in Magmoor…



BOOSTBALL
Fancy a dash of neon when you're high-tailing it from a Sheegoth? This provides morphball speed while doubling up as a handy dynamo for power sockets. It's a real turn-on.



BOMBS
Trapped between a rock and a hard place? Give those unsightly rock formations the 'treatment' by depositing explosives to clear the way. Can also be used to give a leg-up in tight spaces.



Arm Cannon

Available in four flavours. Plasma Red; Power Orange; Cool Ice and (my personal favourite) Purple Wave, you'll be amazed at what else your chrome prosthetic can do for you…



FREEZE
There's nothing more upsetting than having a horny Metroid sucking on your face. Freeze the cheeky blighters with your Ice Cannon to stop them right in their tracks. Dead. Got it?



POWER-UP
Derelict installations are a real downer. The doors don't work, lifts are out of action… pah! Restore power to conduits with a quick blast from your wave beam. That's better.



MELT
Icy wastelands can be a real freeze tease! Health, missile and other upgrades encased in the ice can be thawed with a quick blast of your plasma cannon.

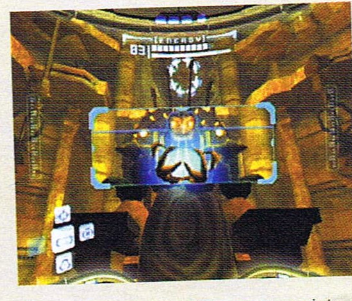


EIGHT EASY STEPS TO BOUNTY-HUNTING SUCCESS

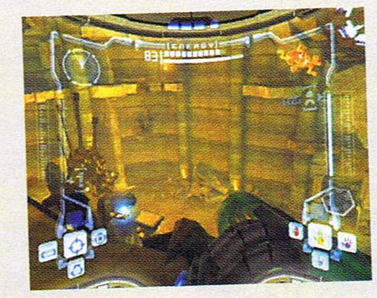
The places I visited on my Tallon IV excursion required me to use a number of attachments in one particular area. Here's a brief example:



Entering the Hall of the Elders, I needed my X-Ray visor to seek out the angered Chozo Ghosts.



Once defeated, my scanner comes into play to analyse my surroundings. This interesting statue in particular.



Using my space boots, I was able to get onto the balcony above for a better view of the situation.



These colour-coded energy fields cou[ld] only be nullified with the correct upgrade from my cannon.

Helmet Visor

Every bounty hunter knows their way around the combat visor. The various attachments found in pirate research facilities however, can give you a whole new outlook on life...







INFORMATION SCANNER
This visor translates hitherto unknown languages, pinpoints an enemy's weak-spots, as well as opening doors and elevators. Use this whenever you're in a new area.

THERMAL VISION
I 'borrowed' this from a pirate lab and all of a sudden the lights went out! I tried it out and I was surrounded by the heat signatures of enemies... so I slaughtered them. All of them.

X-RAY VISOR
This stylish device not only helps me single out ghosts for some severe discipline, it confirms what I always knew but could never prove. My hands really do have a beautiful bone structure...



The Essential Selection

While seeing off would be suitors with a well-placed blast to the kidneys is definitely 'in' this season, here are a few non-aggressive accessories a girl just can't afford to be without...



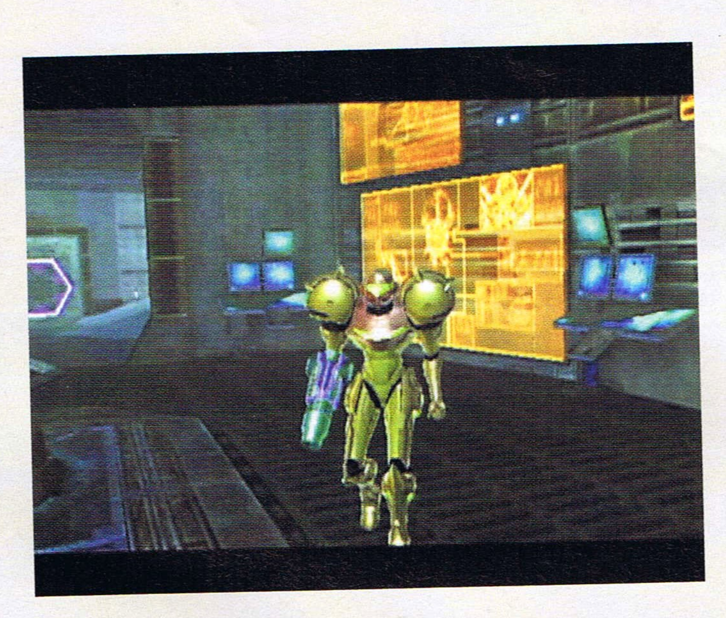




SPACE BOOTS
Weighing in at an impressive, calf-toning 300lbs, these will allow you to leap around like a gazelle (a real life-saver in a cross-fire) while cutting down cross country journey times by up to a third.

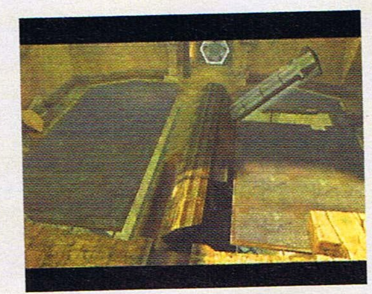
GRAPPLE
Radiation wreaks havoc with your hair and if you end up face down in molten rock, it's doubtful even your own mother will recognise you. Save on make-up by using this grapple attachment.

SUITS
Don't you just hate it when your adventure-wear turns out to unsuitable for those special occasions. Seek out new and improved body suits with colours to die for. It's a new lease of life.





Once opened, my morphball bombs allowed me to hop inside the holes and activate some kind of machine.



Incredibly, the floor below shuddered and rumbled and opened up a fantastic new pathway for me to explore.



Heading back to the statue, I placed myself in its hand, tuned into a morphball and waited.



Amazing! The statue bowled me across a funnel on the floor allowing me to magnetise myself to the wall!

"The opening to *Metroid* is exceptionally well worked out"

DO NOT ADJUST YOUR HELMET

Aside from visor modifications, your view is frequently disrupted due to environmental changes…



MATTER

Waste an insectoid enemy at point-blank range or let them spit their goop at your visor, and marvel as their gelatinous insides splatter over your view-screen.



WATER

Dunk Samus in the water and then leap back up onto dry land. As you do so the water gushes down her visor – distorting your field of vision briefly as it does so.



STEAM

It mists up your visor until it evaporates, although the image 'cheats' somewhat by mirroring itself like an image from a Rorschach test. Nice all the same though.



STATIC

Get too close to a disruptive energy source and your vision gets all messed up like a badly-tuned television set – this can make the battles a very scary experience.



ICE

Enemies in the Phendrana region can blast you with ice. If this happens, you'll freeze on the spot and will have to hammer away at B to free yourself.



Turning into the morphball gives you access to places you wouldn't normally be able to get to.

Many of the puzzles in Metroid require you to manipulate massive structures in more and more ingenious ways in order to progress.

docking ports and airlocks is simple enough, and in between thumbing the C-stick with the desire to circle-strafe up and around the gantry ramps, Samus' heads-up display flashes splendidly useful bite-sized tips on the process of scanning, locking on, jumping and firing her arm cannon.

The opening to *Metroid Prime* is exceptionally well worked out, giving you a taste for the level of artistry that you continually discover throughout the game, as well as feeding you little hints about the story behind your forthcoming adventure. For what is essentially a tutorial, you're thrown into a great deal of action – excessive amounts of scanning aside – from the word go. The game forces you into trying out all of Samus' available equipment so that by the time you reach the first screen-filling boss, the basics of the controls are already under your belt and you're familiar with the hardware. Once the boss has been confidently dispatched, you make your escape from the station before an explosive accident strips you of everything you've just learned. From here you're plunged into the unknown and the game begins afresh.

SILENCE IS GOLDEN

The orbital station gets blown sky-high. Samus, safely back in her ship but lacking

YOU LITTLE BEAUTY

So many to choose from and so little time. Here's a quick run-down on just a few of the game's lovely effects and beauty spots… enjoy!



MIRROR, MIRROR…

So subtle and perfectly implemented. Little touches such as seeing Samus' face reflected back in her visor every time a flash of light hits, help to add to the feeling of total immersion in the world around you.



LIGHTS ALIVE

Light sources plays a very important part in Prime, insofar as the masterful lighting adds greatly to the game's atmosphere. Fireflies light caverns (until you kill them) and cannon shots illuminate the path ahead.



PHENDRANA

Although all the areas are stunning in their own way, by the time you reach this snowy canyon you'll go weak at the knees. The gentle snow, the frozen waterfalls… sniff… it's so, so… sob, beautiful…



FATAL ATTRACTION

They might kill you in a matter of seconds, but you really do have to take the time to marvel at the beauty of the enemies' animation routines. Try killing them on ramps then watch them slide down in their death-throes.



SPECIAL EFFECTS

There are so many to choose from it's ludicrous. Rain hitting your visor; smoothly flowing waterfalls; the shimmering ice on frozen enemies; or in this case, the heat haze coming off your weapon nozzle.



ARCHITECTURE

The locations are stunning, the caves, well… cavernous, and the temples and ruins are simply awe-inspiring. Huge hallways and interactive scenery all make you stand back simply to admire them.

most of her vital skills, flies down to Tallon IV in pursuit of a gigantic winged beast that attacked her on the orbital station. Touching down on the rainy overworld, Samus emerges from her ship in her basic body suit, and your adventure begins.

> **"THE ORBITAL STATION GETS BLOWN SKY-HIGH. SAMUS, SAFELY BACK IN HER SHIP, FLIES DOWN TO TALLON IV"**

As any half-decent space adventurer will know, getting a grasp of your position should be your first job. From the opening of your ship's hatch you use the free-look function to get the gist of your surroundings. Look to the sky and your visor will be the recipient of gentle raindrops that, just as they would on any camera, lend subtle distortions to your view. Your scanner, once activated, gives details of the various flora and fauna in the environment (along with their weaknesses should you wish to obliterate them), as well as pointing out any interesting geological features which could be used to your advantage.



MAP

Without this you'd be in a world of pain. Once you've downloaded the map data from special rooms (think Zelda's map chests) you can check for area's you've not visited yet. This fully 3D map allows you to zoom in, move and rotate as you please – giving a great indication of your location.

An eerie silence surrounds you. As you walk to an area of interest pointed out by your map or your scanner, you can hear Samus' heavy boots crunching on the grass. You hear her suit whine as your clamber up a nearby waterfall, and then, just as you reach the top to get a better view, it hits you. You're isolated. You still don't yet know if you can handle yourself in an all-out scrap. And judging by the sinister contents of that orbital station, it's only a matter of time before you find out…

DUNGEON MASTER

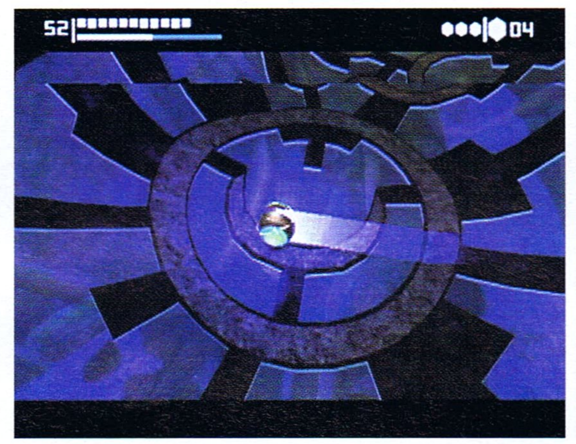
This complete feeling of isolation is *Metroid*'s greatest strength – and it's a facet of the game that Retro



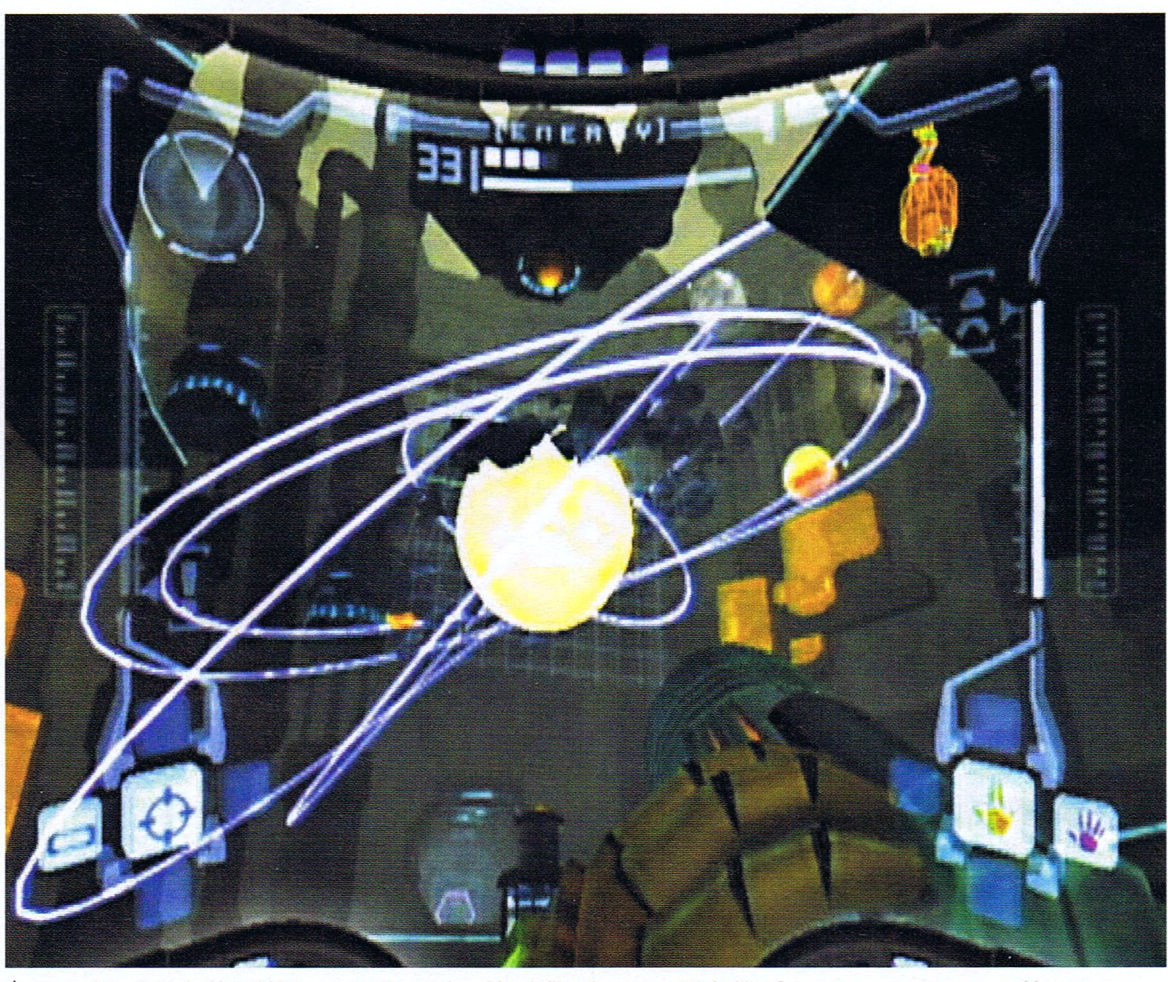
DID YOU KNOW? The original creator of *Metroid*, Gunpei Yokoi, died in 1997, perhaps the reason why there was no *Metroid* on N64. He managed to conceive the Virtual Boy before bowing out, though…



△ **The opening section can only hint at the unspeakable experiments taking place under the surface of Tallon IV.**



△ **Once you get the boostball, you'll be able to propel yourself up half-pipes like this, opening up more secrets and upgrades.**



△ **Many of the sights in *Metroid Prime* are truly stunning. After infiltrating a research facility, Samus manages to power-up this gorgeous display of the solar system, complete with info on each planet. It's through finding things like this that many plot details are divulged to you.**



WHO'S THE DADDY?

We're not going to ruin these for you too much, because half the fun of Metroid is your first encounter with them. Here's a little teaser anyway, to show you how bloody rock they all are.

have capitalised on in the most remarkable way. The ambience from area to area is like nothing you'll have experienced before. The snowy cliffs of Phendrana glitter, with their frozen waterfalls and sparkling caverns. The industrial, lava-filled caverns of Magmoor and the radioactive neon-blue of the Phazon Mines are intimidating yet simultaneously awe-inspiring. They've all been so incredibly well-designed that progressing from location to location brings a genuine sense of wonder as you gape in stupefied awe at the next vista. While there are a number of enemies to dispatch as you move on, the emphasis is very much on taking your time, savouring the atmosphere, and getting as much information from your surroundings as possible. Take the Chozo Ruins as an example. This sun-streaked ancient landscape is rife with clever puzzles, hidden tunnels, alien hieroglyphs (which reveal a great deal about Samus' past and destiny) and gorgeous locales. The only way to discover them is to be exceptionally observant and take in as much as possible as you traverse the different areas. What might look like a patch of dirt may hide an opening to a beautifully carved hallway. What seems like a simple statue could well be a way of propelling yourself to a new weapon, or a simple switch could set entire walls rumbling apart to open up a brand new and mysterious path.

Structurally speaking, the game plays like an enormous, infinitely more detailed and convoluted *Ocarina of Time* dungeon. You follow your nose until you inevitably get lost. You consult your map when you do, and check for any areas you've not yet

> **"THE VAST, DETAILED ENVIRONMENTS RIVAL ZELDA AS THE FINEST GAMING LOCATIONS YET CONCEIVED"**



ELECTRO HEAVEN

Metroid has a superb soundtrack that ebbs and flows depending on your situation. Composed in MIDI, and sounding like the Aphex Twin let loose on a theremin, it's not only reminiscent of the early Metroids, but it captures the solitary mood of the game's locations.

NGC FIELD OF PLAY

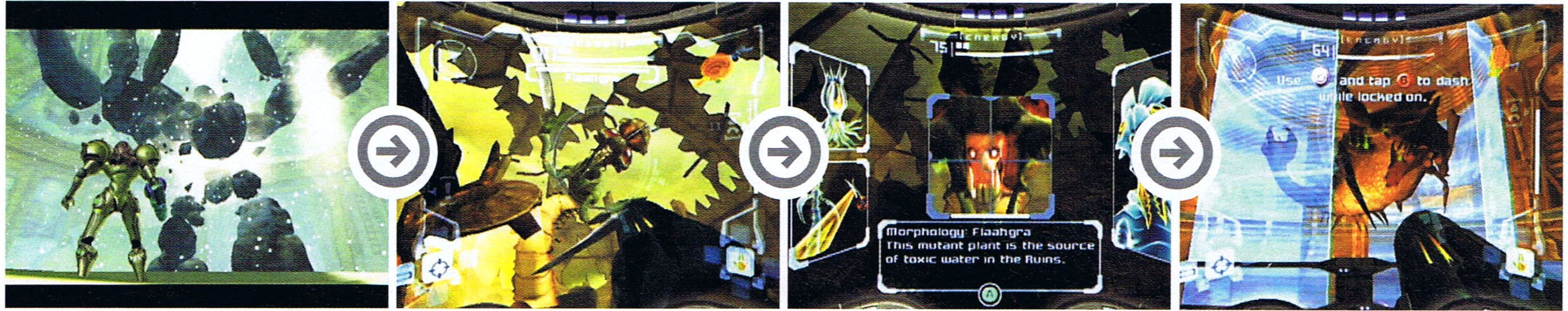
Closing in on *Metroid's* defining moments, and most impressive assets...

HIDE AND SEEK

The game world is huge. HUGE. Hidden pathways, secret caves, tunnels, canyons and sheer cliff faces are all there for you to explore, and that's before you've entered any of the facilities and installations. These vast, detailed environments rival Zelda as the finest, most brilliantly conceived gaming locations ever.

REWARDS

Metroid excels in this department. For every ever-so-slightly painful journey back through a level, you'll be rewarded with a new piece of ultra-useful kit. Or you'll be witness to an all-new area that will have you weeping with delight at the sheer immensity of it all. Amazing.



visited. With the buildings divided into a series of rooms and corridors (complete with respawning enemies should you exit and then return) you meticulously inspect every crevice and geological feature. You shoot every ornate decoration in the hope that it may yield *something* to further your progress. Once satisfied that you've done all you can in one location you move on. Slowly but surely, you open more of *Prime's* architecturally impressive landscapes until you reach a room of particular significance (you can tell which ones they are because they're so beautiful that you'll have to stop, take a look around and then wipe the drool from your analogue stick) before scratching your head and pondering its purpose.

Just like in *Zelda*, these areas often act like gigantic puzzles that require you to use a number of your skills in conjunction with each other. However, also just like in *Zelda*, it's not always that easy. Sometimes you don't have the necessary skill you need to solve a particular conundrum, so inevitably you'll have to push further through the world – completing more inventive puzzles as you go – to earn the skill before returning with your new ability.

Granted, this kind of dynamic means that you have to backtrack a great deal – and this can be very annoying at times. However, it's not as bad as you might think. In true Nintendo fashion, the pain of walking back through a level for ten minutes is unfailingly rewarded by something incredible. Whether it opens a route to one of the game's amazing boss encounters, gives you extra health or missile capacity (believe us, you need those two), or simply gives access to another jaw-dropping section of the level, you'll never feel disgruntled at having been forced to go back. In fact, you'll be thankful.

As each hour passes, Samus accumulates more and more heavy-duty weaponry to add to her expanding suit of armour. She becomes increasingly versatile to the point that you're really glad you *can't* circle-strafe – not only is it unnecessary, but it would mean sacrificing your array of energy beams, explosives and physical attributes. With each puzzle solved or difficulty overcome you'll feel a mixture of exhilaration and relief



GALLERY

As you scan the various bits of data in the game, your internal computer (accessed by pressing Start) keeps a log of all new entries. At 50 per cent of 'all things scanned' we unlocked this tasty gallery of concept art. We can only wonder what we'll get once we achieve 100 per cent...

"The most impressive visual touches you'll see"



△ The wave-missile combo is very much like the streams in Ghostbusters.



△ Once you get the gravity suit, you'll move freely in water.



△ Never take things for granted, everything hides something.



△ From the start, right through to the end, you'll feel so immersed in the experience that tearing yourself away is very hard.



△ It's so calm at times, you can spend hours just staring at stuff.



△ Indigenous plant and wildlife can often be the key to progressing into a level.

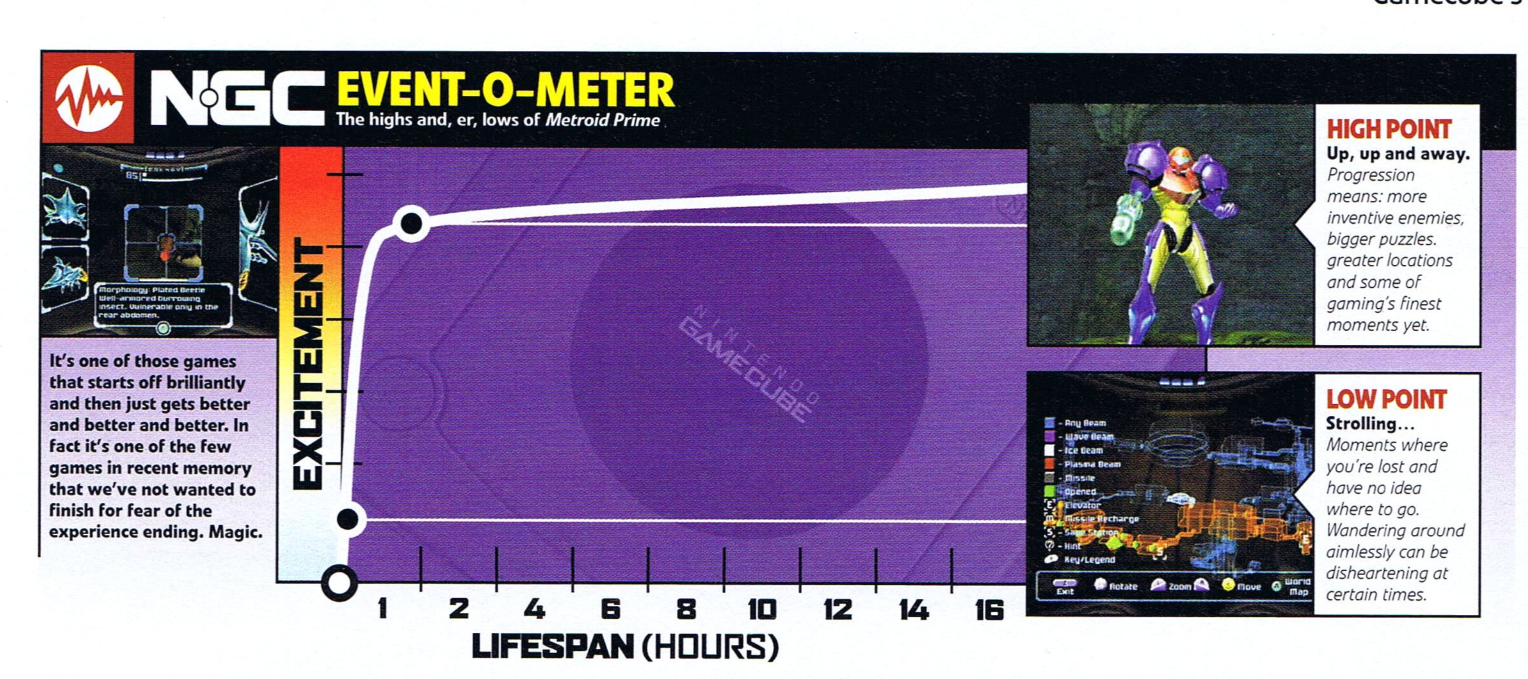
as you progress. From the intensity of negotiating high-rise platforms, to acquiring a new weapon upgrade, to the overwhelming sense of fear as you limp back to a save point in order to keep it, you'll experience exhaustion, elation and on occasion, pride at your achievements. More importantly, however, as you're drip-fed tantalising morsels of the story behind the game via your scanner, the driving incentive to discover and explore more of this expansive world becomes overpowering.



PLAYTIME

We managed to complete Prime with 81 per cent of it uncovered in about 20 hours. However, that doesn't take into account retrying tough sections. There are still secrets we haven't uncovered yet, so in total we'd estimate about 30-plus hours to discover everything.

NGC EVENT-O-METER
The highs and, er, lows of *Metroid Prime*

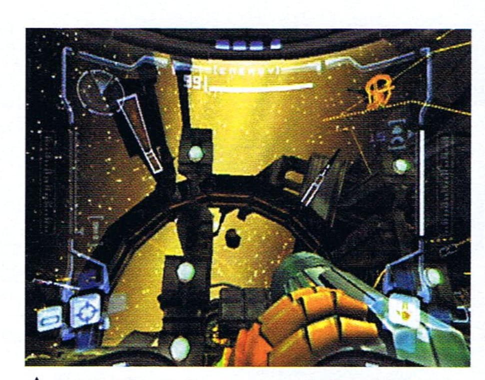


It's one of those games that starts off brilliantly and then just gets better and better and better. In fact it's one of the few games in recent memory that we've not wanted to finish for fear of the experience ending. Magic.

HIGH POINT
Up, up and away.
Progression means: more inventive enemies, bigger puzzles. greater locations and some of gaming's finest moments yet.

LOW POINT
Strolling…
Moments where you're lost and have no idea where to go. Wandering around aimlessly can be disheartening at certain times.





▵ The opening section may seem breathtaking to begin with – but in comparison to what's in store…



▵ …once you get to the planet below, you ain't seen nothing yet. This section needs to be taken slowly. Make sure you scan everything to get an idea of the story. If you miss anything you can't go back to get data later on.

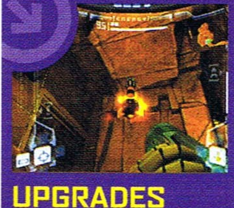
RETRO REVOLUTION

Of course, such traits are nothing new. As we said, *Ocarina of Time*'s dungeons work in a very similar way. However, the only games that *truly* (and wholeheartedly) reflect *Ocarina*'s gameplay style are Samus' other 2D incarnations. Very much like *Super Mario 64* was to *Super Mario World* or *Ocarina of Time* to *Link to the Past*, *Metroid Prime* is the perfect three-dimensional interpretation of the foundations laid down by *Super Metroid*. Aside from a couple of omissions, such as Samus' screw attack, everything is in place – with the added bonus of the most impressive visual touches you're likely to see anytime soon. Retro Studios have added more effects than we ever imagined the Cube was capable of. Overuse of bump-mapping has been ignored in favour of effects like heat haze, static disruption, prism-like distortion on crystalline structures, incredible use of particle effects, and the most mind-bending implementation of level geometry we've witnessed. Best of all, when you think you've seen it all, your efforts are rewarded with something even *better*. Whether it's a view across a canyon, an enemy smashing its way towards you, the activation of a long-dormant alien machine or just a simple reflection from your visor, this game will continue to absorb, delight, frighten and surprise you until the end.

What more is there to say? This is, without question, Gamecube's finest hour to date. It's quite simply astonishing.

GERAINT EVANS

"RETRO STUDIOS HAVE ADDED MORE EFFECTS THAN WE EVER IMAGINED GAMECUBE WAS TRULY CAPABLE OF"



UPGRADES

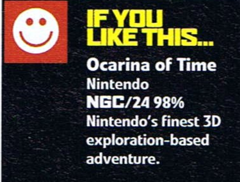
On your travels, one of the most important aspects is taking time out to find all the missile and energy upgrades. These work like Zelda's heart system and bomb-carrying abilities. If you go out of your way to increase your capacity, dealing with the games tough-as-you-like bosses becomes a much easier.



- True to the 2D *Metroids*
- Gorgeous in all ways.
- Mind-bending puzzles.
- Varied action.



- It ends eventually.
- A lot of backtracking.
- Respawning enemies.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Ocarina of Time
Nintendo
NGC/24 98%
Nintendo's finest 3D exploration-based adventure.



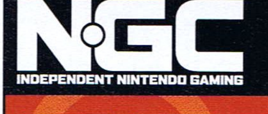
10 VISUALS
Glorious effects, stunning architecture. Metroid truly shines like a diamond.


8 SOUNDS
Some great music, some crap music and with lovely FX.


10 MASTERY
Milk it baby! Huge, detailed worlds with no slowdown. Ever.


8 LIFESPAN
Big, but once it's over you'll only really want to play it once more.

VERDICT
A game of true quality, this is a beautiful thing. The best game on Gamecube, and a title that stands among the world's finest ever.





"*Metroid Fusion* is a beautifully constructed affair"

BOUNTY HUNTER
Samus Aran, our hero (or heroine), a bounty hunter by trade and pretty powerful to boot. She can upgrade her armour with a variety of equipment, allowing her access to new areas and to kill unpleasant monsters.

CARTOGRAPHY
Lost? Confused? Worry no more. The wonderful map screen shows where you are at all times, and even highlights some inaccessible areas. A helpful computer tells you where to go next, although you're on your own for much of the time.

BOSSES
Naturally, as well as fending off hostile lifeforms of a more common-or-garden variety, there are big, bad bosses to beat up, too. They're all quite tricky – indeed, Martin couldn't even beat the first one. Twit.

ENVIRONMENT
Following the events of Super Metroid, *Samus must make her way to the Biologic space labs station to cleanse the area of X parasites. The space station plays host to many different environmental conditions.*

LINK UP
Complete Metroid Fusion *and link it up with* Metroid Prime, *and you'll open up the original NES* Metroid *to play on the Gamecube. Nice!*

NGC STAR GAME

METROID FUSION

Samus returns… again! And the GBA gets spoiled once more.



INFO BURST

FORMAT	GBA
FROM	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30



S*uper Metroid* on the SNES was a remarkable game. Like a side-scrolling *Zelda* with guns (if you want to use a reductive, if accurate, description), it was a masterpiece of isolated, eerie exploration set in a far-flung future. *Metroid Fusion* is remarkably similar to *Super Metroid,* following the structure of the SNES game, but in this case familiarity doesn't breed contempt. It's also a magnificent game, and one that, for the relatively short time it'll be glued firmly in your GBA, will absorb you just as much as its worthy predecessor, as well as its big Gamecube brother.

Of course, it's debatable exactly how many of you might remember *Super Metroid,* meaning that the experience *Fusion* delivers might feel utterly fresh. It was released back in the early 90s, and despite a reputation as one of Nintendo's premier franchises, *Metroid* skipped a console generation, not appearing on the N64 at all, a machine that otherwise played host to a number of updated and improved SNES classics. Nevertheless, the non-appearance of a 64-bit *Metroid* hasn't dimmed the regard in which the series is held – or the anticipation for new *Metroid* games.

SAMUS BEFORE

But back to *Fusion.* As Samus Aran, intergalactic bounty hunter, you've been infected with the mysterious X organism, a parasite that has transformed your armour and abilities. It's an intriguing wrinkle in the saga of Samus, but what it means in practice is that you can recover health and acquire abilities by absorbing the X parasite from other infected creatures, rather than bolting on mechanical devices, giving the game a pleasingly organic feel.

As we've said, *Metroid* is all about exploration. And to further explain that comparison with *Zelda,* this basically means that, as you progress through the game, the new powers and abilities you acquire allow access to previously inaccessible areas; you'll be constantly noting locked doors or unreachable map squares so you can return later when you have the means of entry. It's a very 'Nintendo' gameplay element, and provokes experimentation and constant attention to detail – a cracked wall can be demolished by a bomb, or an impassable structure can be broken through with the



BAD SAMUS
In *Metroid Fusion,* Samus takes a break from destroying the titular aliens and fights the deadly X parasite, a nasty infective beastie. She gets infected herself, immunises herself with Metroid juice, and sloughs off some armour, which in turn gets possessed and animated by an increasingly aware X organism…

METROID FUSION

Scintillant bounty-hunting handheld gaming beauty

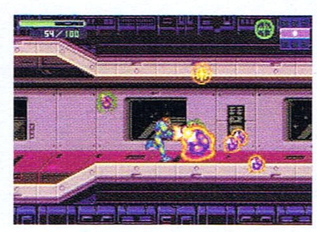
△ Kill an enemy and it'll release an X parasite; useful for health renewal and ammo re-stockage. Yes indeed.



△ The Samus-impersonating X organism is really very tough.



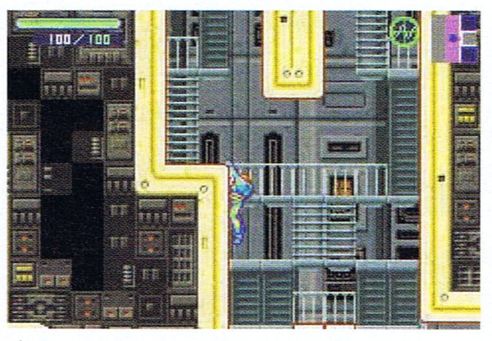
△ Samus' ship is more insectile than in previous outings…



△ Some of the bigger X blobs are tough to kill. Nasty things, eh?



△ The sense of being alone – aside from the ravenous beasties, that is – is marvellously created. Wicked.



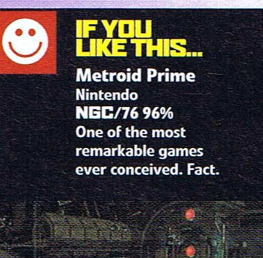
△ Samus, in brand-new Fusion suit, goes a-climbing. You'll need to master the wall-jump for some sections.

+

- Intricate structure.
- Eerie sound.
- Brilliant exploration.
- Relentlessly thrilling.



- A little short.
- A little reliant on shooting everything in sight to progress.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…
Metroid Prime
Nintendo
NGC/76 96%
One of the most remarkable games ever conceived. Fact.



8 VISUALS
Beautifully detailed and animated, if a little hard to see on the screen.



8 SOUNDS
Magnificently eerie soundtrack and effects. Evocative and moody.

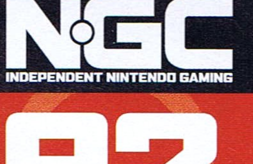
8 MASTERY
Makes the most of the hardware to produce a superb, rounded game.

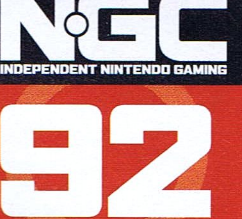




6 LIFESPAN
Offers good replay value, but is a little short first time around.

VERDICT
A little short, but you'll love every minute of it. Deserves a place alongside *Advance Wars* and *Yoshi's Island.*





TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Just a few of the items and weapons available to Samus…



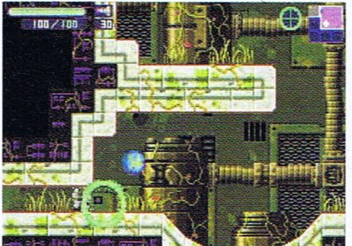
MISSILES

Hold down R and press B for an explosive projectile. Great for enemy dispersal, opening certain doors and destroying otherwise-impervious obstacles.



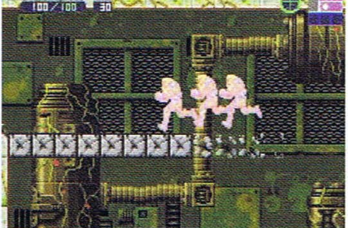
ICE ROCKETS

A chillier version of the regular rockets, these freeze enemies prior to you killing them. Best used when you need an ice-cold stepping-stone to higher areas…



BOMBS

In Morph Ball mode, Samus can drop bombs. These can blow up walls or help Samus jump when she's rolled up – as well, of course, as blowing enemies to kingdom come.



SPEED BOOSTER

You'll need plenty of space for this one – run for long enough and Samus will blur into high-speed, allowing her to break through walls marked a with sideways 'V'.

Speed Booster. *Metroid Fusion* is a beautifully constructed affair, and the fact that you're constantly exhorted to try everything in your repertoire in order to proceed means that the game never lets you rest on your laurels.

> **"FUSION WILL ABSORB YOU AS MUCH AS ITS PREDECESSOR, AS WELL AS ITS GAMECUBE BIG BROTHER"**

BLAST BORE

However, this also means that you're sometimes reduced to simply blasting everything in sight in order to find a way out of a room, and if *Fusion* has any significant weakness it is this. Aside from the lifespan issues, that is.

You can complete *Metroid Fusion* in around six or seven hours, if you're dedicated, and are familiar enough with the way the *Metroid* structure works. However, this is leavened somewhat by the plethora of secret areas – naturally, coming back to the game and uncovering everything takes a bit more time – but nevertheless, this isn't the lengthiest GBA game around.

But it's still one of the best, and like *Pikmin* or *Luigi's Mansion* on the Gamecube, the experience and enjoyment of playing the game far outweighs any perceived paucity of length. *Metroid Fusion* offers a perfectly rounded experience, and you won't get bored of it; it doesn't drag, there's no filler material, and it's constantly thrilling.

Fusion also throws light on *Metroid Prime*'s greatest achievement – namely, how brilliantly the *Metroid* template has been updated for three dimensions. And it's a testament to the quality of *Fusion* that playing it perfectly complements the more expansive and 'realistic' environments of the Gamecube title; there might not be any scanning going on in this GBA gem, but the physical structure of both games is fundamentally similar.

A magnificent treat. Buy it now!

JES BICKHAM



HANGING AROUND

While there are plenty of abilities bestowed by new equipment, Samus has plenty of innate abilities too. For instance, you can climb and hang off the ladder-style wall furnishings, and it's possible to wall-jump, *Mario*-style. It's very tricky to pull off, though.

"The heavily-tattooed Billy is horse of an entirely darker hue…"

REBECCA
The sweet-but-determined heroine of our story. Likely to be played by Jennifer Love-Hewitt in any movie adaptation. Are you listening, Paul Anderson?

DROPPED ITEMS
Easy to spot, either by the glitteriness or via your map.

BILLY
Bad-boy anti-hero with a mysterious past. Did he really murder 23 people in cold blood? He must be innocent, surely…

STATUS SCREEN
Loads to do here, from examining and combining a variety of items, to configuring your partner's AI pattern, changing the game options, checking the map and reading notes you've collected for crucial clues.

GET INTO THE GAME
It's up to you to make sure Rebecca's very first mission runs smoothly…

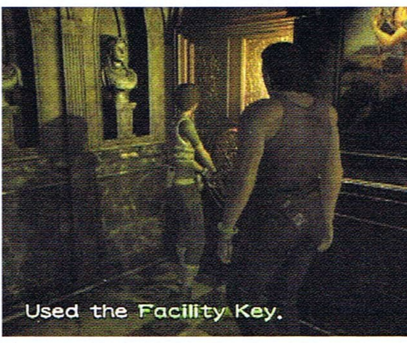
TRAIN TRAINING
The train is a great place to start exploring, not least because of the layout. Unlike the mansion, it's hard to get lost on something so long and thin – even if there are two storeys. Your first priority is to team up with Billy, but before you can do that you'll need to explore the immediate area, get used to the controls again, and pick up as many items as you can. There are loads more objects in the game than you will ever be able to hold at one time, so get used to thinking ahead…



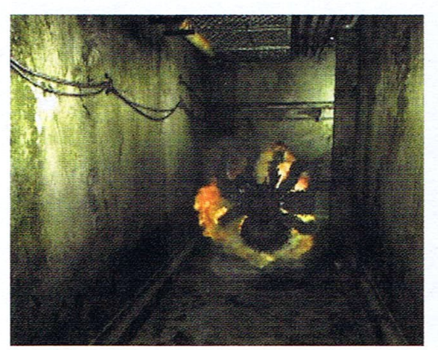
△ This is the first Bendy-Armed Zombie (BAZ) you encounter. Good thing the loo is nearby.



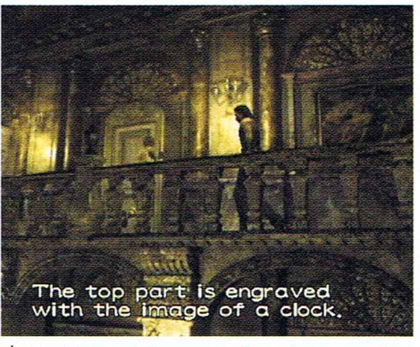
△ Despite the fact that zombies are slow-moving targets who never attempt to defend themselves properly, they can often obscure the camera view, making combat teeth-grittingly tricky.



△ Any time words appear in a different colour, it's a no-brainer to figure out they're important.



△ A lot of the monsters are just creepy-crawlies swollen to enormous size, like this spider.



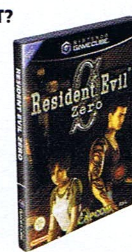
△ Stupid bloody clock-door. Presumably there's some tortuous clock puzzle to figure out here.

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	CAPCOM
PUBLISHER	CAPCOM
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	9
GBA LINK-UP	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Out in the States right now – not out till windy old March over here, though.

COST: $50 (£35)



RESIDENT EVIL ZERO

Let's go back… WAY back, to the very beginning, to the deep, dark creepy heart of all that pesky zombie business…



The *Resident Evil* games are stalwarts of the industry – virtually synonymous with quality, their legacy spans six years and has left gamers all over the world clutching their joypads in fear, so hard that their knuckles whiten and the plastic casing begins to crack. Everyone's played them, and quite rightly everyone sits up and takes notice when a new one hits the shelves. But, like the horror films that Capcom have been so heavily influenced by, has *Resident Evil* started to labour an over-familiar formula?

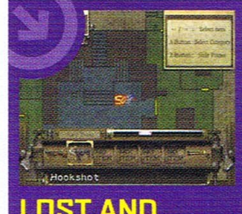
Resident Evil Zero, for those isolated few who may not know, is set Immediately before the events of *Resident Evil*. It stars a fresh-faced, 18-year-old Rebecca Chambers and, in an unprecedented gameplay twist, a second simultaneously playable character, Billy Coen. Rebecca, as fans will already know, is a plucky medic working for S.T.A.R.S., the Special Tactics And Rescue Service. She's a new recruit to Bravo Team – whose helicopter, you doubtless remember, crashed in the dark depths of a wood in the original *Resident Evil*. While Alpha Team investigate the mansion, Becks stumbles across the Ecliptic Express, a train that seems eerily devoid of life.

The heavily-tattooed Billy is a horse of an entirely darker hue. Convicted of the murder of 23 people, this ex-Marine's transport crashes under mysterious circumstances, leaving him as the sole survivor. When Rebecca first meets him on the train – handcuffs dangling from a hand holding an automatic pistol aimed at her head – he seems like the unlikeliest ally. Despite their differences, and in classic mismatched-cop buddy movie style, circumstances force them to join together and battle an altogether more sinister – and smellier, hungrier – foe…

TRAIN OF FOUGHT

This first section of the game, trapped on board a ghost train hurtling towards God-only-knows where, is an absolute joy to play. The classic gameplay elements we all

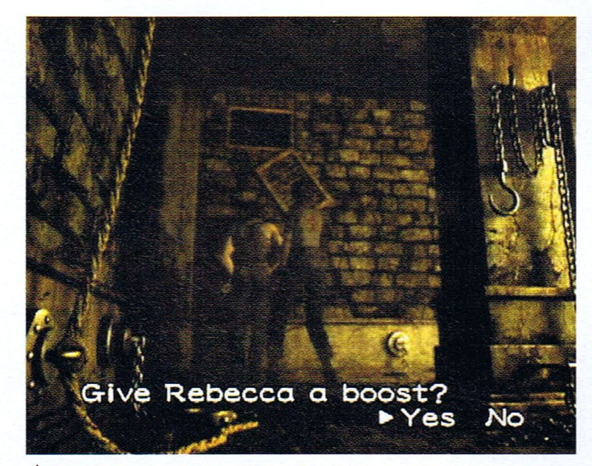




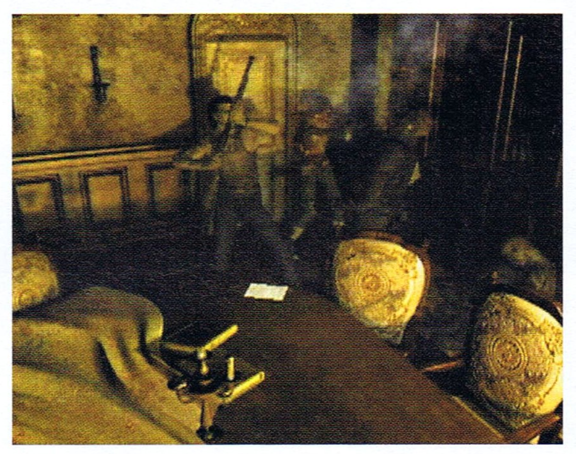
LOST AND FOUND

As before, you have to pick up maps on your travels for them to be added to your file. However, because this time you're likely to be dumping bits of kit all over the place, the map automatically tracks objects. Handy.

"The control system is… how to put this… still rubbish"



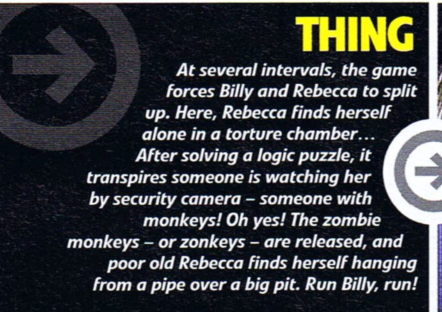
△ One of the regular examples of teamwork – most of which, apparently, simply imply that Billy is strong. And Rebecca isn't.



△ There's nothing quite like the feeling of waiting for a zombie to get really, really close, then taking his head clean off. Mmmmmm.



△ Breathe a sigh of relief when you see a room like this. Herbs on the floor, typewriter on the desk? Yep – you're in a safe room. Even the music is lovely and calming. Don't expect it to last, though – just through that door is some exceptionally gruesome stuff, even for *Resi*…

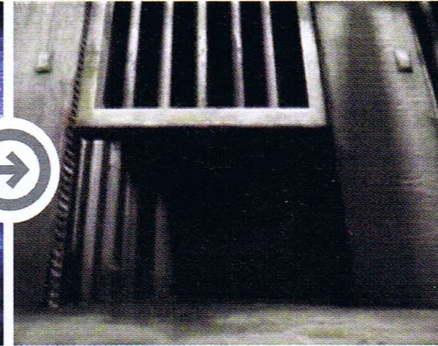


THING

At several intervals, the game forces Billy and Rebecca to split up. Here, Rebecca finds herself alone in a torture chamber… After solving a logic puzzle, it transpires someone is watching her by security camera – someone with monkeys! Oh yes! The zombie monkeys – or zonkeys – are released, and poor old Rebecca finds herself hanging from a pipe over a big pit. Run Billy, run!



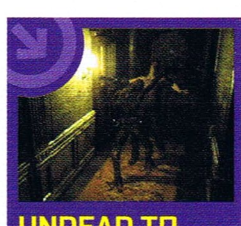




know and love are present and correct; the environments are yet another step forward in their rich intricacy and nerve-jangling atmosphere; and the two-character- at-once system is implemented slowly but surely until it feels like second nature. In fact, it's a testament to the game's designers that every function of what could potentially have been a complex system is pretty much a button-press away. The X-button switches control, the Start button alternates between the follow me/stay here modes with a nice little voice sample and accompanying gesture, and anything more involved, such as swapping inventory items, can be done in the Status screen (accessed using the Y-button). This is also where you can decide whether the character you aren't controlling should open fire when targets present themselves, or hold off – a crucial balance, given the predictable paucity of ammo.

Yes, the controls are beautifully intuitive… well, except, of course, for the actual movement. Arguably, the system, present from the very first instalment that came out six whole years ago, is as integral as the red/green/blue herbs or the zombie hounds to the mythology of the games. Then again… how to put this… it's still rubbish. Being forced to rotate on the spot before pushing forward to move is pretty much the definition of counter-intuitive, and for a game where a step in the wrong direction, or a hesitation at the wrong time can end up with you sporting a flesh-dripping beast from beyond the grave hanging off your neck, it's verging on unforgivable. Pressing back and the B-button to spin you around a quick 180 degrees goes a long way to suppress our ire, but the fact that you've now got two

> **"THE TWO-CHARACTER-AT-ONCE SYSTEM IS IMPLEMENTED SLOWLY UNTIL IT FEELS LIKE SECOND NATURE"**



UNDEAD TO RIGHTS

Aside from the standard zombie/dog/raven foes, giant cockroach-thingies are also a-scuttling about the game in a less-than-friendly fashion – and a new mutated zombie-creature will cause you no end of headaches. Even headshots don't put them down!

NGC FIELD OF PLAY

In a dark, dark train, in a dark, dark wood, there lived a bunch of hungry zombies…

Take the Iron Needle?
▸Yes No Use

IRON SPIKE

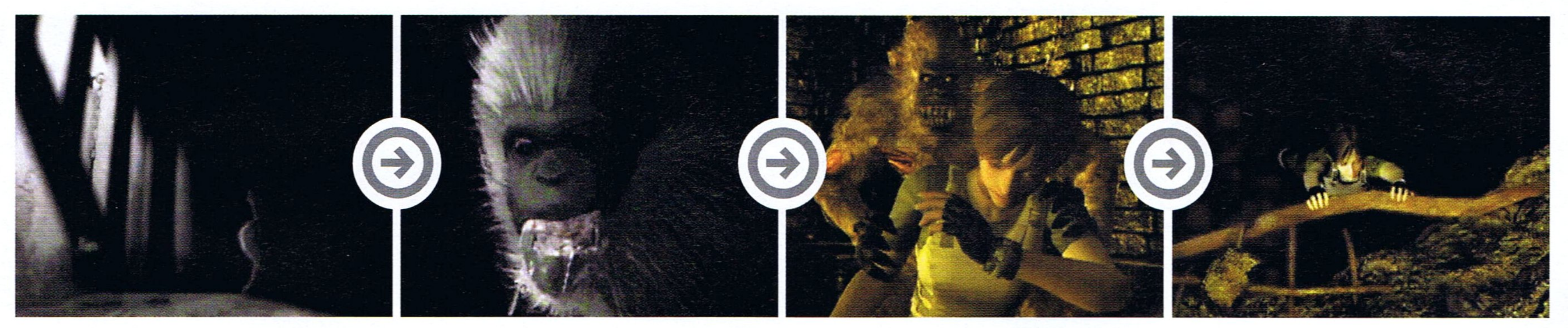
There's clock with a missing hand, and this being Resi, there's no point assuming it's bust and moving on. The hand must be somewhere – wasn't there something glinting in that stuffed head earlier on?

The minute hand is missing from the dial.

There seems to be something here.

HEADS YOU WIN…

It's too high to reach, but with a little lateral thinking, a little desk is pushed underneath, and Billy clambers onto it. Hooray! We found it! Only another sixteen thousand pointless puzzles to go…



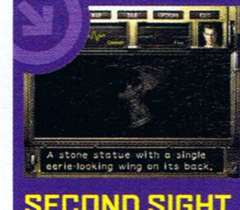
characters who can now easily get in each others' way, and demonstrate occasionally dubious AI reactions when left to fend for themselves, seems to highlight the problem even more than before.

CAMERA WRANGLES

This, of course, works hand-in-hand with the camera. You know the one. You've cursed it before. Raise your hands if you've found yourself trying to fight off zombies in a tiny, cramped screen, completely losing track of your position when you back off slightly or turn, only for the screen to flick to a different angle. Or indeed, if you've ever fired at a zombie shambling towards you at the other end of a corridor, but you're not entirely sure if you're even hitting it, because all you can see is your character's body, and their arm disappearing off the edge of the screen. Sure, you could move forwards to get a better view. If you wanted to walk straight into the accursed monster's arms, that is. Neither problem is ever close to insurmountable, but both together certainly make their presence felt at choice inopportune moments, and we can't help but wonder why the obvious changes haven't been made.

Admittedly, there's no way – with current technology – of having such gloriously detailed backgrounds and have them rotate in real-time 3D. We may be irked, but we're not unreasonable, and we wouldn't sacrifice the graphical excellence even if we had the choice. They really are masterpieces, worth just gazing at to appreciate the effort and time that has gone into them. The colours are necessarily muted and grim given the subject matter, but almost photo-realistic at times. It's the tiny animations that really make all the difference, though, and it's just a pity there are so many lovely touches in the train sequence and relatively few in subsequent episodes.

You can't talk about the visual excellence of a *Resident Evil* game without also talking about the sound, though. The two are equally responsible for creating that famously eerie ambience, with sound effects and incidental music that never stops tweaking your nerve endings. Distant shambling footsteps; animalistic chitters and



SECOND SIGHT

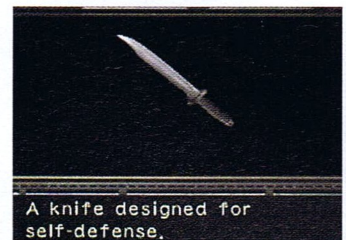
If it ever seems like you've run out of places to go, and you've hit a dead end, try going through your inventory and examining all the puzzle objects from various angles – there are two books, for example, which open to reveal crucial items… that's a hint, you know. Aren't we good to you?

DID YOU KNOW? There's already a second Resident Evil movie in production – called Resident Evil: Nemesis. It's due out for release in 2003. Hope it's as good as the first one…

"Managing the inventory is a crucial part of the gameplay"

ALL THE GUN OF THE SCARE

Killing things that are already dead requires professional equipment…



The standard equipment for S.T.A.R.S. officers.

A conventional pump-action shotgun.





KNIFE

The most basic weapon. If you end up relying on this, you're pretty much screwed anyway. At a push, you could use it to get rid of the odd raven to save ammo. Probably best not to even carry it most of the time, and free up a slot.

PISTOL

Best for long-distance zombie killage, it's soon outstripped in sheer power by other weapons, but stays useful for a while if only because of the amount of ammo you can find and hold for it. Interestingly, we even managed a headshot with one.

SHOTGUN

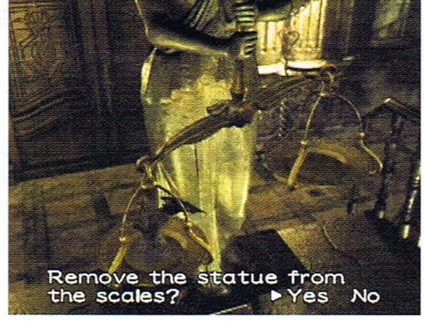
The first one you find, the hunting gun, is an old-fashioned bit of kit that holds two rounds at a time, and requires constant reloading. Fortunately, a more practical pump-action fella can be found in the mansion – excellent for clustered targets.

MOLOTOV COCKTAILS

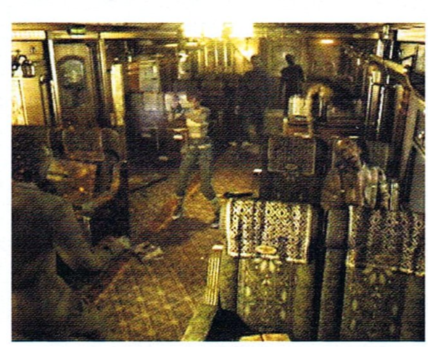
You have to actually create these yourself by combining empty bottles and gasoline tanks. Be warned – when thrown at zombies they tend to just set them on fire, making them doubly dangerous!

GRENADE LAUNCHER

Who's the daddy? Grenade rounds don't grow on trees, but it's the first really heavy weapon you find. It can load incendiary rounds, but like the shotgun takes up two precious slots.



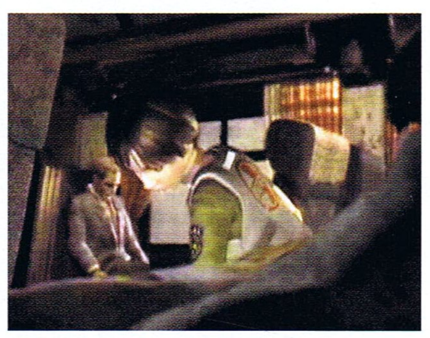
△ **The first really pivotal puzzle of the mansion.**



△ **It's never nice being surrounded by zombies.**



△ **Once again, there are outdoor areas of the map – equally as grim and detailed as the interior ones. Billy and Rebecca had better turn around sharpish, if they don't want to become bird food…**



△ **That guy in the background can't be a zombie.**



△ **Ooh, isn't he studly? Swoon, etc.**

scratching sounds; sudden key changes as you enter a new room – the horror is always implied rather than rammed down your throat, in the best tradition of psychological cinema, and tremendously effective for it.

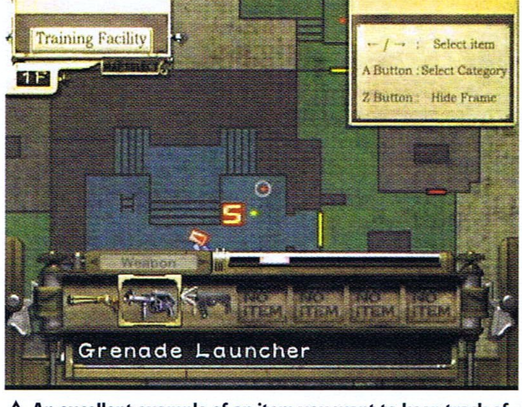
This immersive environment of creeping terror is very carefully created, so it's a shame that you'll never feel the full impact of it until the second time you play through the game, when of course you know exactly what's going to happen. The first time through, you get the shocks, but you also get the laborious, atmosphere-killing treks from room to room as you try to find that door you just opened. Since, in *Resident Evil Zero*, there are no boxes to store extra equipment, you have to either hold items or drop them off somewhere where you can pick them up later. Inventory slots are limited, of course – managing them effectively is a crucial part of the gameplay. It's not uncommon, then, to find yourself with a door to go through, and no idea what to take with you. Will this statue be important in there? I don't want to come all the way back here for it… I can take either the pistol or the shotgun but I don't have room for both – which kind of ammo am I most likely to find in there? If I choose wrong it could be fatal. Should I take typewriter ribbons, just in case?

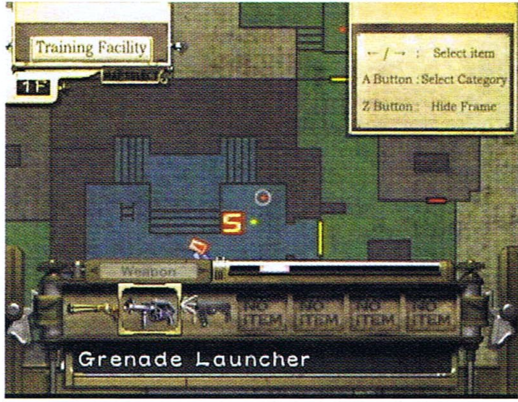
The first play through is a slightly disjointed affair as you feel your way around, probably wasting a little more ammunition than you should, probably getting stuck on some of the less obvious puzzles. When it's played 'properly', as the programmers intend, it's a smooth, slick, brilliantly polished plot-driven adventure of

"IN THE BEST TRADITION, THE HORROR IS ALWAYS IMPLIED RATHER THAN RAMMED DOWN YOUR THROAT"

LEECH TO THEIR OWN

Gosh. The cut-scenes in the game are outstandingly beautiful – that is, if you think that a swarm of glistening carnivorous undead leech-creatures devouring people whole while a man in a white nightie sings falsetto opera is beautiful. Takes all sorts. Tsk. Sicko.





△ An excellent example of an item you want to keep track of.

△ Combining the gas tank with the empty bottle gets you a tasty Molotov cocktail.

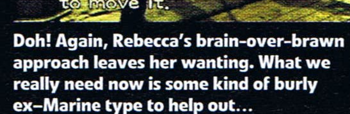
HOW TO...
KILL ZOMBIE ENEMY #1

The first boss could easily take you by surprise – when you get to the puzzle below, just make sure Billy has all the best weapons on him, and some healing items too…

There's something shiny under here, infuriatingly. Want shiny thing! Sadly, puny Rebecca won't be heaving this cage up any time soon.



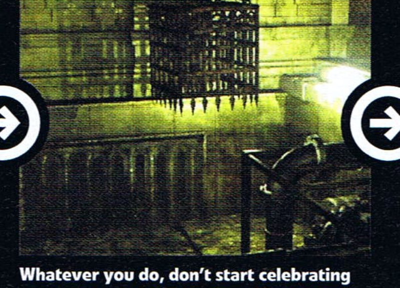
But what's this? Back up the ladder, there's a row of interesting-looking winches! A-ha! Success! That was easy, after all. Wasn't it?



Doh! Again, Rebecca's brain-over-brawn approach leaves her wanting. What we really need now is some kind of burly ex-Marine type to help out…



Yeah, he'll do. Rebecca needed to run down and unlock a door to let him in, but it's worth the hassle for the precious Shiny Thing, surely…



Whatever you do, don't start celebrating once you've raised the cage. We did, and when we let go of the winch the damn thing landed on Rebecca, impaling her…

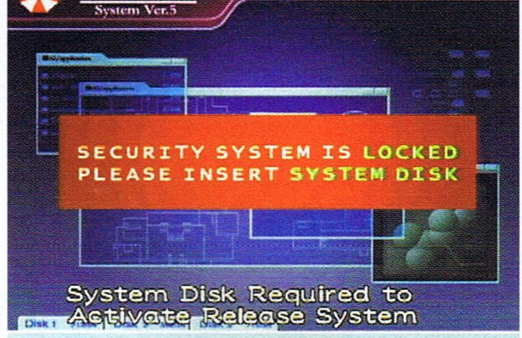


What a stupid question. Have we just gone through all that trouble just to leave the Facility Key where it is? No, of course we haven't. Now to find the Facility Door…

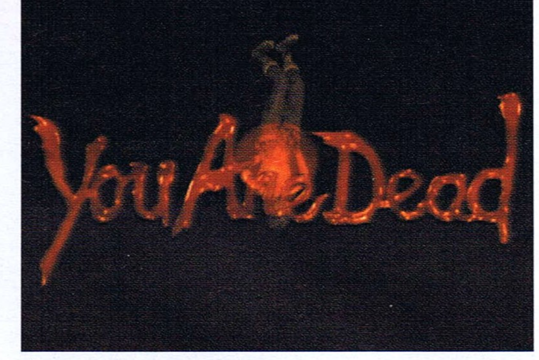
Double-doh! It seems we weren't the only ones eyeing up that shiny. A giant centipede bursts into the room, grabbing Rebecca – Billy will need to pump everything he's got into the beast, so to speak. If he's too sluggardly, he risks Rebecca dying on him…



"Ever taken on a giant centipede with a knife?"



Generic security computers are a familiar feature.

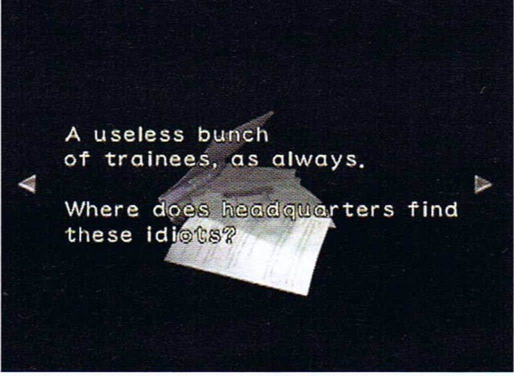


Expect to see this more than once…





A purty piece of kit, but two blocks is a lot to sacrifice…



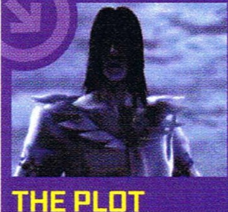
Not a leaked fax from Popstars HQ, but a diary entry…

the very highest order – just don't expect it to play like that the first time around.

DEJA-WOO!

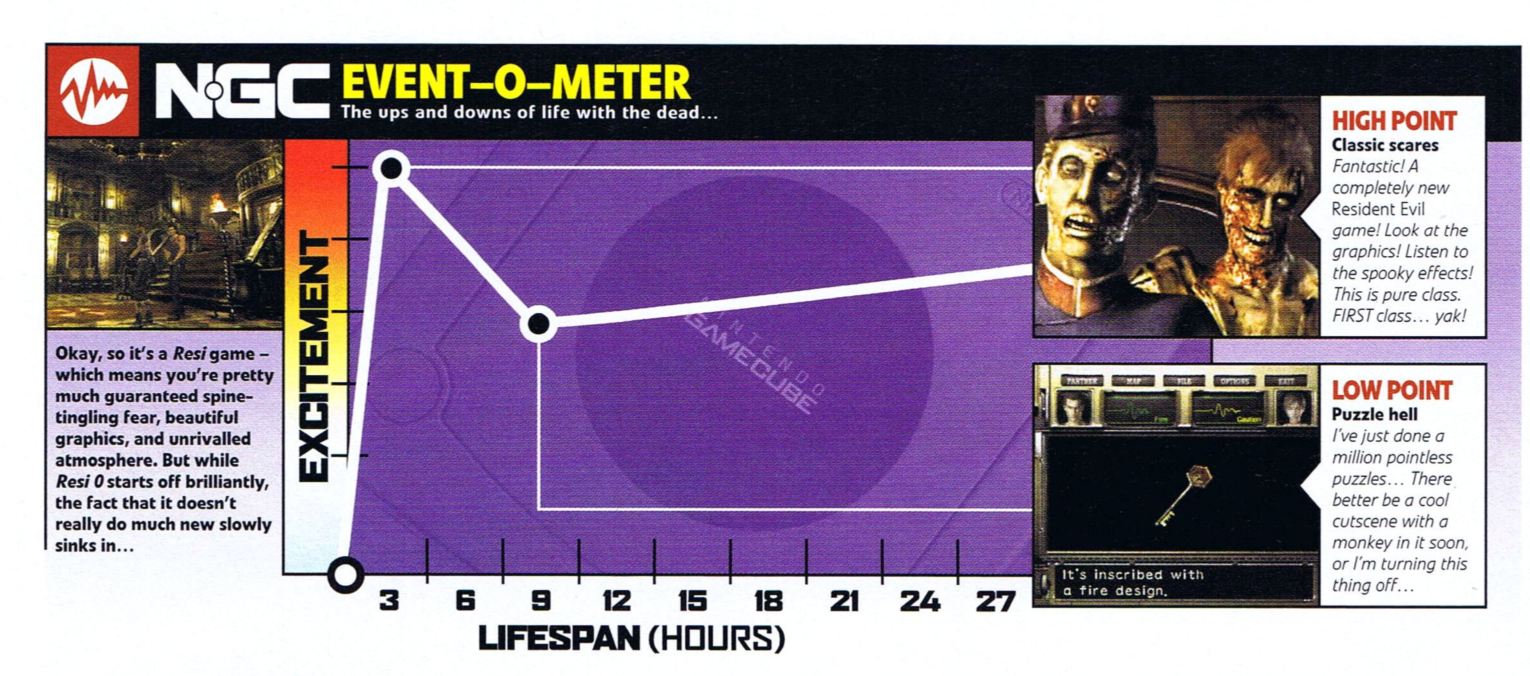
After the train section, which in more than one way serves as a kind of tutorial/showcase for the rest of the game, you find yourself in a very familiar-feeling mansion… The place is rammed full of puzzles, all of the classic *Resident Evil* flavour. For 'classic', read 'surreal'. What kind of office building requires you balance the Statues of Good and Evil on the Scales of Truth just to get to your desk in the morning? Moving giant chess pieces around and finding the fire key for the fire door (just to pick a random example) had a kind of eccentric charm in the earlier *Resident Evil* games, but it's just getting tiresome now. Realistically, all they consist of is: move object A to point B; combine with object C; insert into slot D which opens door E. Very little actual skill is required in solving the puzzles, and the important objects glitter unmistakably when you enter a room, so scant satisfaction is gleaned from solving them. Usually, if you get stuck on something, it's because you accidentally missed an item, or haven't examined it closely enough in the status screen, or you don't actually have to do it yet – it's the balance of ammo-to-enemies that's the really tricky bit.

We played through on Normal setting,



THE PLOT SICKENS

While we don't want to spoil anything for you, obviously, you might be interested to discover that the identity of the mysterious man in white is… Argh! Aaaacck! No! Get back! No! Noooooooo– (high pitched squealing followed by sickening crunching noise).



Okay, so it's a *Resi* game – which means you're pretty much guaranteed spine-tingling fear, beautiful graphics, and unrivalled atmosphere. But while *Resi 0* starts off brilliantly, the fact that it doesn't really do much new slowly sinks in…

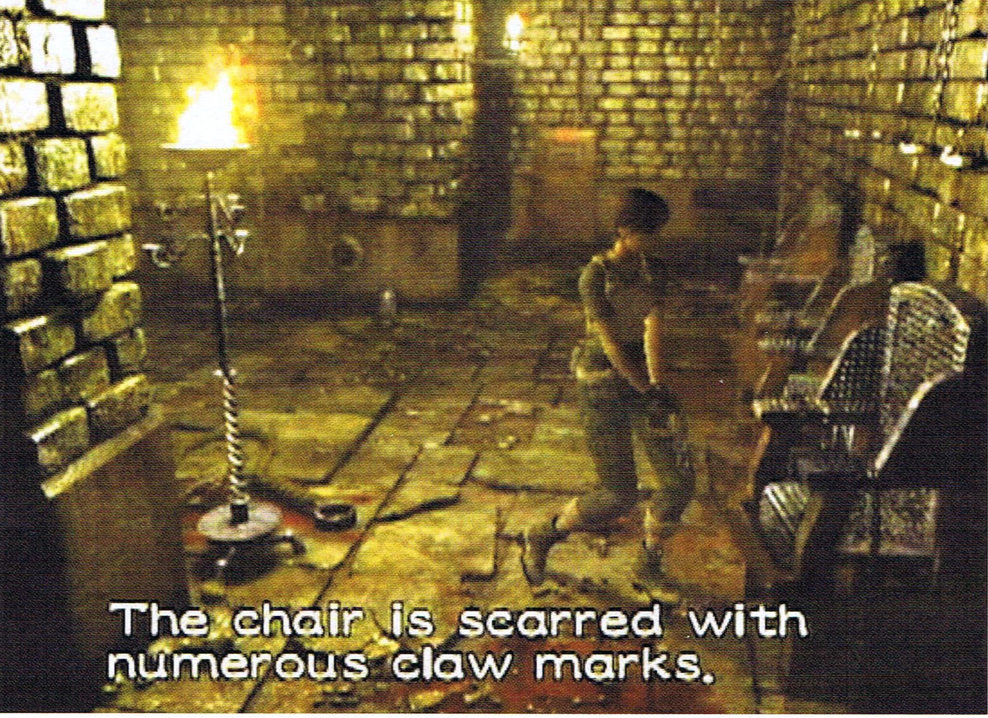
HIGH POINT
Classic scares
Fantastic! A completely new Resident Evil game! Look at the graphics! Listen to the spooky effects! This is pure class. FIRST class… yak!

LOW POINT
Puzzle hell
I've just done a million pointless puzzles… There better be a cool cutscene with a monkey in it soon, or I'm turning this thing off…





△ If only Becks had some 100W bulbs and an Uzi…



△ As ever, you stumble into a large proportion of rooms just AFTER something really nasty's happened in them…

and we've rarely experienced a game with such finely balanced difficulty. At one point, we thought we were completely stuck – we'd got to the first boss, and realised that we didn't have nearly enough ammo to kill it. Ever tried taking down a giant centipede with a knife? Exactly. The thought of starting all over again was heart-crushingly depressing, then we remembered a single room we hadn't explored previously, because it contained several enemies and, at the time, we were ill-equipped to deal with them. As a last-ditch effort, we used most of our remaining ammunition to clear the room out, and what did we find? Only some shotgun shells and a sodding great grenade launcher, that's all.

> **"VERY LITTLE SKILL IS REQUIRED TO SOLVE THE PUZZLES – THE BALANCE OF AMMO IS THE REALLY TRICKY BIT"**

The game purposefully makes it difficult to stockpile ammo for very long, constantly making you nervous about what might be lurking around the next corner, and whether you have enough firepower and/or energy to take it down. It's judged to perfection, and keeps you on your toes like a ballerina with… um… no heels.

MONKEY BUSINESS

Resident Evil Zero is a genuinely great game, but while it's introduced an excellent new two-character system, it's eliminated very few of the increasingly obvious flaws that have haunted previous *Resident Evil* titles. There's little chance you'll regret buying it, though, if only for some of the plot revelations – and, of course, the monkeys (ah, the monkeys – just wait and see…). Nevertheless, any game with this kind of legacy has a lot to live up to, and we couldn't in all honesty hail it as a classic.

TOM MAYO

DOUBLE TROUBLE

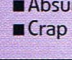
The control system will be instantly familiar to anyone who's already played Resident Evil, but with one nice little addition – the C-stick allows you to effectively control both characters simultaneously. Fab! As Thunderbirds were wont to say. Damn fool puppets.



- Dual character system adds 'untold' new levels of strategy.
- Beautifully realised game world.
- Loads of plot twists.



- Absurd puzzles, again
- Crap controls live on.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…
Resident Evil
Capcom
NGC/72 89%
The update of the original – zombie nostalgia in 128 bits…



9 VISUALS
Gawp at the pretty backgrounds as the fear squeezes your bladder.



9 SOUNDS
Shriek as the spooky effects cause urine to pool in your shoe.

7 MASTERY
Frown unhappily as clunky design snaps you out of the mood.



8 LIFESPAN
Breathe a sigh of relief as you finish (yet) another *Resident Evil*.

VERDICT

There's not really any such thing as a bad Resi game. A well-balanced, atmospheric game, dragged down by PSone mechanics.





DID YOU KNOW? Night of the Living Dead director George A Romero was originally slated to direct the Resident Evil movie, but it fell through due to 'creative differences'.

"You'll romp around Diagon Alley picking up new skills"





△ At Professor Lockhart's Duelling Club you get to take on the wicked Draco.



△ Diagon Alley is magical. And you're sure to find Hagrid propping up the bar!

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	EA
PUBLISHER	EA
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	1
GBA LINK-UP	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES
SURROUND SOUND	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Now. EA were so worried we'd blow the plot we had to wait until the film came out…

COST: £40



HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

Chamber Potter! The series that keeps on Rowling, Rowling, Rowling materialises on Gamecube…

GET INTO THE GAME
Pick up and play the easy way…

IT'S A WIZARD START

As you'd expect from a game aimed at everyone from babies in cots to your dear old granny, Harry Potter And The Chamber of Secrets is a doddle to get into. Just hit the Start button, select New Game and before you know it you're chucked straight into a rollicking from Ron's mam and a quick tutorial level which means you don't have to waste valuable eye-power or gaming time reading the manual. After a quick introduction to the game controls and a spot of de-gnoming you're ready to go.





Throw off your Cloak of Cynicism and pull on your fetching Hogwarts school kit, because guess what? The latest Harry Potter game is a bit of a corker. Okay, so hardcore gamers might be put off by platform gameplay that hardly breaks new ground, but for sheer pick-up-and-playability you can't really fault *The Chamber of Secrets*.

The game kicks off with a trip to the Weasley gaffe for a quick lesson in de-gnoming and an introduction to the game controls, which will be a breeze for those who played Harry's last outing, *The Philosopher's Stone*. Then it's off to Hogwarts itself as you unravel a string of mysterious happenings, which kick off with an unprovoked attack on poor Nearly Headless Nick. As the plot unfolds you



DE-GNOMINATION

The pick of the game's many mini-games has got to be gnome chucking, which starts off as a bit of pest control in the Weasley's back garden. You have to do a bit of de-gnoming, hitting targets and beating distance records to spice it up a bit.

WHOMPING WILLOW

It seems the Whomping Willow wants to keep hold of Ron for a while which is why this area is out of bounds. Time to get your spellbook out and find a weak spot. And then get out of there!

What kept you, Harry? I can't hang around here all night, y'know!

RUN AWAY!

The best way to beat the Willow is to lure it into striking distance. When you're close, sprint away to avoid the blow, and then turn and blast a Flipendo at the nasty blighter.

CAR WARS

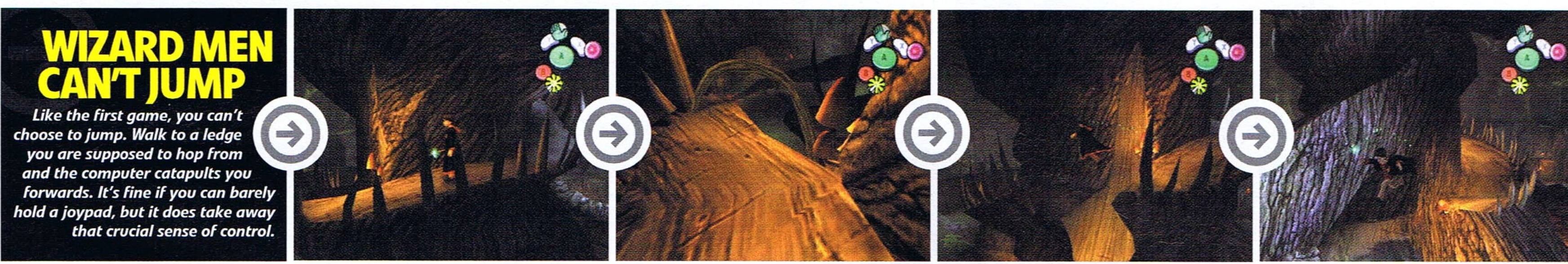
When you really annoy the magic tree it will pick up the Ford Anglia and attempt to hammer it into your face repeatedly. That's not very friendly, is it?

'WARTS AND ALL

Once you've beaten this malicious tree the way to Hogwarts is clear and your adventure can begin in earnest. Just time for a quick celebratory cuddle with Ron before you leg it into school.

WIZARD MEN CAN'T JUMP

Like the first game, you can't choose to jump. Walk to a ledge you are supposed to hop from and the computer catapults you forwards. It's fine if you can barely hold a joypad, but it does take away that crucial sense of control.



undertake a string of tasks in the school grounds and beyond, taking on mighty creatures and the odd tricky puzzle.

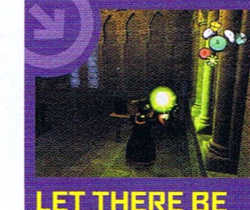
Before you reach the imposing magical school, and later when you need to grab some supplies to learn your second year magic, you'll romp around Diagon Alley, trying to decipher a pretty useless map.

Leaving no Philosopher's Stone unturned in a bid to keep younger gamers happy (which can get a little bit annoying at times), you're in for another recap of the basic skills on arrival at Hogwarts. Luckily, the mission goals you collect as you root through desks, picking up new skills such as the Wall Sneak, before hopping into the famous flying car. Be warned, however – you don't get to control the blighter, which makes it all the more annoying when the mission to rescue Ron from the Whomping Willow turns out to be a bit of a chore as you leg it around uncover secret passages and annoy Slytherin bods are quite rewarding. The game is built around a series of days in which you can take on fixed tasks such as learning a new spell, saving a trapped pal, or even having a blast at Quidditch.

To add a bit of spice, the developers have chucked in a ton of diversions from the main run of tasks. Apart from the unfolding plot there are loads of mini-games to keep you busy. There's a series of challenges, such as the familiar flying through rings on your Nimbus 2000. And a clever design touch means you are asked to move up and down to configure your controls – obviously the developers have listened to criticism of the first game's annoying inverted controls.

You can also collect Bertie Botts Beans to either buy goods from a shop or unlock extra features. Upgrading your armoury with cool weapons such as a balloon that distracts prefects and stink pellets proves extremely handy. Watch out though: since these beans are so valuable, and despite the fact there's plenty around, it gets really annoying when you've picked up loads of

> **"YOU CAN COLLECT BERTIE BOTTS BEANS TO EITHER BUY GOODS FROM A SHOP OR UNLOCK NEW FEATURES"**



LET THERE BE LIGHT

Use your Lumos magic to expose hidden doors to secret passages. As you cast a brilliant green light, shafts of white light shoot through the holes in the wall and you are immediately given the choice to push through the door with a simple press of a button.

DID YOU KNOW? If you've got a PC you can visit www.harrypotter.com to play cool Harry Potter mini-games, download a desktop owl, and even enrol at Hogwarts to get sorted...

"If the prefects spot you sneaking around they'll zap you"

NGC FIELD OF PLAY

Investigate to accumulate…

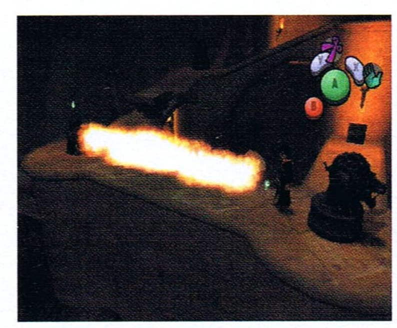
HOT BUTTONS

This handy map of the joypad shows you which tricks and weapons you've assigned to each button, allowing you to quickly blast out a spell as and when required.

LOOK OUT!

There are many magical objects in The Chamber of Secrets, but some items may not seem worth investigating. Luckily, Harry glowers at anything that takes his fancy so you won't miss many important objects.





△ Wait for the fire to die down, then Flipendo the furniture and nip past! Good thinking!



△ The locations from the movie are given a nice cutesy spin. Dig that Real Flame™ fire…

"FREQUENT CUT-SCENES DEVELOP THE STORY AND HELP YOU FEEL YOU'RE IN THE POTTER UNIVERSE"

them and some nasty head-butts the little jigglers out of your wizard's sleeve. Still, it's nothing a quick Flipendo doesn't put right…

There are also house points to collect so you can drive Gryffindor to glory over your main rivals Slytherin. But be warned, if the prefects spot you sneaking around forbidden areas they'll zap you with a spell and deduct 20 house points. Explain that one to Hermione and Ron!

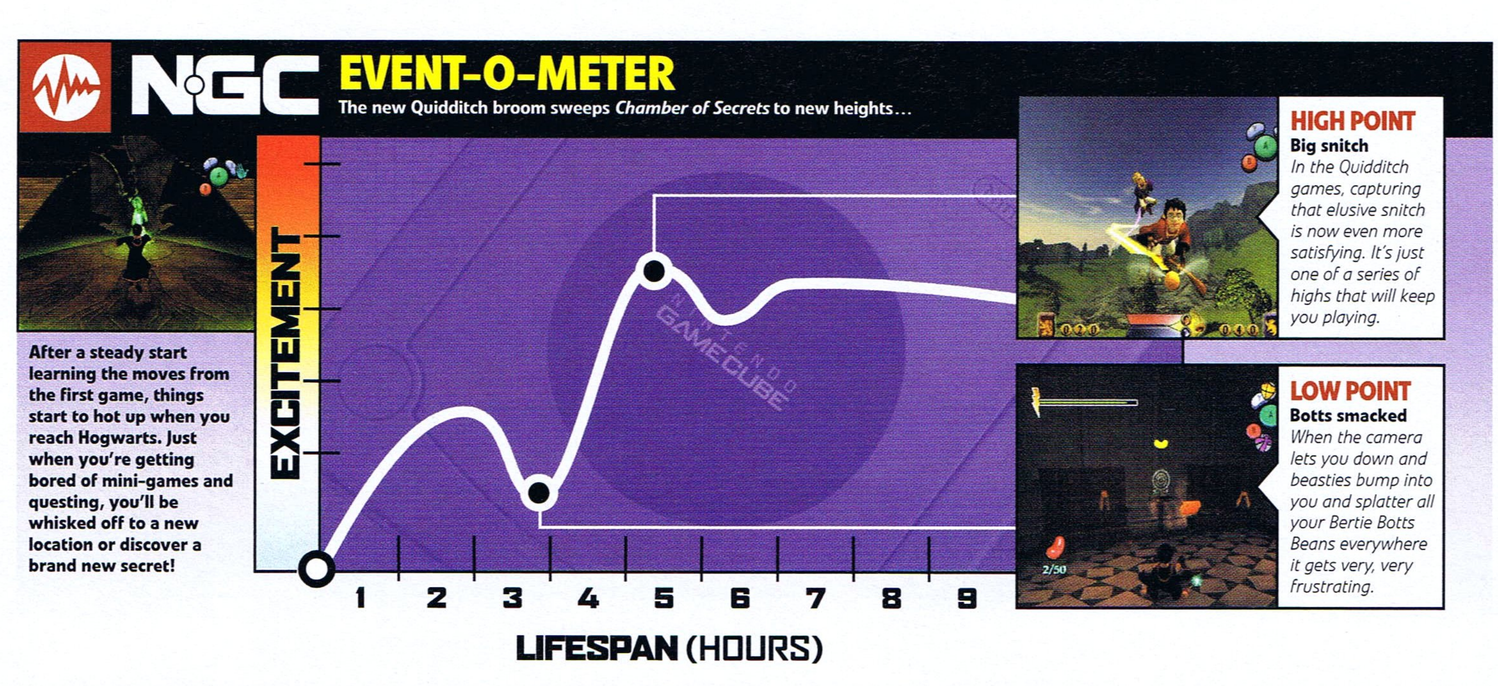
As you blast around Hogwarts and beyond, taking on puzzles and monsters and battling your arch-rival Draco Malfoy, you also get to collect 99 Wizard cards. You can even trade cards with your fellow pupils when you end up with two the same. How very Pokémon…

WIZARD AURA

Once your prescribed tasks for the day are done, you're free to roam around as you please – you can break your own gnome-throwing record if you like, or hunt down some goodies in the nooks and crannies around Hogwarts. And while it's great fun



DID YOU KNOW? Filming on the third Harry Potter movie, Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban, starts next month. The film is expected to be released in the summer of 2004.






△ Dip your flask in this well and you'll top up your health bar. It tastes bleedin' awful, though…



△ All manner of scenery and furniture can be Flipendoed to uncover fabulous hidden goodies such as Pumpkin Pasties.



△ Transfer maps, magical items and secret spells to the GBA game.

finding a lost potion and solving a tricky puzzle, this freeform structure sometimes wears a little thin, covering as it does some pretty simple gameplay. Often your quests are based on trial-and-error puzzling, fetching and carrying objects, and using spells when prompted.

On the plus side, this accessible structure means that everyone, especially younger players, can get into the action without having to surmount a steep difficulty curve. The disadvantage is that experienced gamers may feel a little short-changed.

Through the glossy graphics and generally excellent design a few cracks in the fabric of the game occasionally appear. For starters, you can sometimes defy the developer's intentions by approaching a problem too boldy. An example: if you undertake a certain part of the Whomping Willow level without first calling Hedwig for a bit of obvious advice, the game refuses to let you continue because you didn't do things in the right order, placing a strange fog over the hole you know for a fact you must enter. The reliance on such scripted events eventually exposes the structure of *The Chamber of Secrets* as you realise the game would be a lot shorter if you just got on with trying to complete it.

That said, triggered events such as the frequent cut-scenes develop the story and help you feel you're in the Harry Potter universe. And it's clear EA have tried to reproduce the atmosphere of Harry Potter above all else. The music is nothing short of magical and the voice acting, though the game doesn't feature the movie actors, isn't bad at all. The locations look fantastic, and you get to try your hand at almost all of the coolest bits from the book.

The franchise factor is an important part of the game's appeal. But who doesn't forgive the odd bit of dodgy gameplay if you get to shoot stormtroopers, play Bond or, in this case, bump into the magical characters from JK Rowling's fine books?

Let's face it, though, a great atmosphere and some neat extras can only make a game so appealing - the critic in us says this is hardly a victory for originality. *The Chamber of Secrets* is, however, the perfect alternative to a family walk in the rain. Add 10 per cent to the score if you are so Potter potty you've changed your name to Malfoy. But take note – *Mario Sunshine* it aint…

LEE HALL



EYES OF A LEGEND

The game features a first-person mode which allows you to peer through Harry's peepers. It's a handy skill because the game features some stealthy sections when you have to nip past prefects and the like.



- Sumptuous graphics.
- Magical atmosphere.
- Highly accessible.
- Very entertaining.



- Deceptively linear.
- A lot of fetching and carrying.
- Occasionally frustrating.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…

Luigi's Mansion
Nintendo
NGC/67 90%
Spooky ghost-vacuuming with Mazza's runt brother.



8 VISUALS
They evoke the Harry Potter universe almost perfectly. Great stuff.



8 SOUNDS
As well as top voice acting, the music sparkles magically .

7 MASTERY
Basic adventuring is topped off with excellent set-pieces.

7 LIFESPAN
Plenty of collectables and mini-games will keep you playing.

VERDICT
Without breaking new gaming ground *The Chamber of Secrets* is an almost perfect book-to-film-to-game conversion.





"The environments are expansive and fairly interesting"



Enemies can be dispatched with your boomerang or by biting their kneecaps with your gnashers.



Though somewhat unimaginative, the environments are huge.



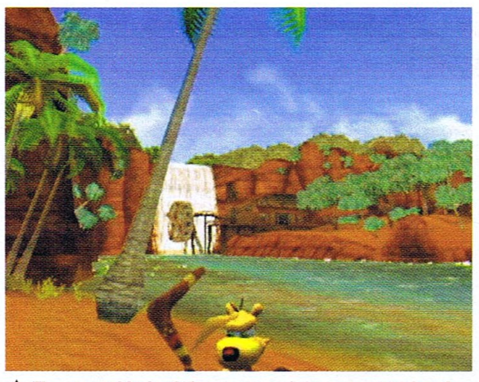
A 'crazy' cast of characters help Ty throughout his adventures.



Twin boomerangs can be used to glide over distances.



Those red gems are begging to be collected… *cough.*



The central hub of the game – giving access to levels.

TY THE TASMANIAN TIGER

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	EA
PUBLISHER	EA
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	1
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	YES

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger will be available by the time you read this word: wah!



COST: £40

'Don't come the raw prawn with me, mate', and other pointless international stereotypes…

It was hard to ignore the moans of pre-judgemental disapproval sweeping through the office when we unwrapped this one. We've had plenty of pointless platforming buffoons over the years (Gex, anyone?), but this one takes the biscuit. A boomerang-wielding Tasmanian tiger whose goal is to collect five talismans to restore peace to the land. From the game's central hub, you have to 'warp' to various themed levels where you must collect the requisite number of cogs, gems and free a certain amount of caged critters before you can progress.

Before you start losing the will to live, it's fair to say that *Ty* isn't that bad a game. Visually, it's nothing to write home about, but at least it's competent. Unlike last month's appalling *Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex* and *Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly*, the environments are expansive and interesting enough, while the frame-rate always remains consistently high. True, the worlds aren't the most detailed around, but the fact that it runs so smoothly makes a big difference insofar as it's one irritation that's been taken care of.

However, in comparison to something like *Mario*, *Ty* seems a bit lacking. To start with, his skill set is pretty limited. Ty has various types of boomerangs at his disposal, as well as the ability to hang from ledges and glide to cover any extra distances. He can also bite enemies as a secondary form of attack – and that's pretty much it as far as the basics go. Furthermore, the worlds Ty traverses, while entertaining, never really provide any significant shocks or moments of exhilaration – something that's made all the more apparent when you consider the low difficulty level. For experienced gamers, *Ty* will be nothing more than a long, arduous slog through simple, but convoluted tasks.

In its favour, though, *Ty*'s simplicity, bright and cheerful design, well-explained tutorials and mildly amusing dialogue makes this well worth a look for younger gamers who might find something like *Mario* a little too difficult or demanding. Hardly the best 3D platformer we can think of, but by no means as awful as we thought it would be.

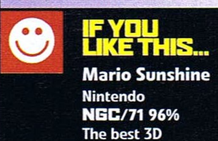
GERAINT EVANS



- Bright and clear.
- Smooth frame-rate.
- Large game world.
- Good for beginners.



- Very easy.
- Clichéd platforming tasks to get through.
- Dull for veterans.



Mario Sunshine
Nintendo
NGC/71 96%
The best 3D platformer on Gamecube.





6 VISUALS
Bright, colourful and well animated, but the detail is pretty poor.



6 SOUNDS
Cheery enough tunes and effects, with full speech throughout.



6 MASTERY
Big world devoid of clutter. Very slick frame-rate throughout.

7 LIFESPAN
Pretty simple, but it'll take a while to find all the hidden collectables.

VERDICT
Not a poor game – but hardly cutting-edge either. Definitely worth a look for younger gamers after a fun platformer.





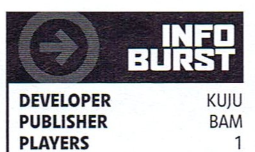
"The dragon levels are much more enjoyable"

AMMO
You get nowhere near enough missiles to kill all the dragons, so you'd better learn how to shoot that machine gun.

DRAGONS
They want you dead, and you want them dead. It's a harmonious relationship between man and beast.

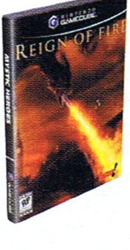
RADAR
Not the clearest radar we've ever seen. It's very hard to locate anything specific with so much extraneous information scattered all over it.

HUMANS
Don't shoot them. Don't run into their vehicles either, because you'll just rebound.



DEVELOPER	KUJU
PUBLISHER	BAM
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	3
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
This is out now in the UK, and also in the US for all you NTSC-import mentalisers.





COST: £40

REIGN OF FIRE

Celluloid duffer becomes a so-so Gamecube shooter, minus Matthew McConaughey and co.

A post-apocalyptic world, where a rag-tag army of grizzled survivors battles to save the last remaining human settlements from a horde of fire-spitting dragons. And once mankind has been saved, the chance to turn the tables, see what it's like to fight for the bad guys, and spit a little fire of your own.

Sounds like a fine idea for a game, even if the movie it's based on sank without a trace. *Reign of Fire* just about manages to lift itself above the average, but ultimately the grand concept doesn't receive the treatment it deserves, particularly on Gamecube.

PANIC STATIONS

The action takes place in jeeps, tanks and armoured vehicles, over ruined wasteland swarming with dragons. Mission objectives flash up on the screen, always something along the lines of travel to point A, protect thing B, then return to base C. Ammo for the essential missile launchers is severely limited, as you'd expect when there's nobody alive to manufacture the stuff any more, but infinite machine gun rounds can be used to knock out the enemies too. However, it's just a little slower.

The vehicle controls are borrowed from the Xbox game *Halo*, transposing a familiar first-person twin-joystick method to four wheels





△ Clumsy analogue controls make aiming a nightmare.


△ Turn off the crap speech before it drives you mental.


△ Marvel as your truck rebounds off a strand of wire.

DRAGON AND ON AND ON…
You have to endure this much to get to the better stuff…



GUN RUNNERS
The standard machine guns are a last resort for taking down dragons without missiles.



LOCK AND LOAD
Heat-seekers will lock-on to any winged beast and knock it out of the sky pretty quickly.



RESCUE MISSION
Make your way to the target zone, then hang around blasting dragons, until you can leave.



PROTECT AND SERVE
Once rescued, your new buddies will have to be protected on the way back to the base.



FEEL THE BURN
Take too many fireballs and your vehicle will catch light. You don't want this to happen.



SOOTHE THE PAIN
Luckily there are water pipes at various points. Shoot them to douse the flames.



BUTT OUT
These little fellas don't do much damage, but if you bash into them, you'll stop dead.



FIRE FIGHT
Blokes run around on fire, while you chase them with a squirter. Stand still, dammit!

and a gun turret.

While this can be fun for the occasional quick blast, the main problem is that it just isn't done particularly well. The vehicles in *Halo* are fun to drive because of the way they skid and bounce so convincingly and controllably around the landscape. In *Reign of Fire*, the physics model is so basic, the cars stop dead or go into high-speed reverse mode when they so much as brush against a solid object.

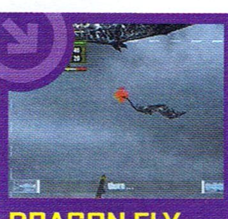
Most parts of the landscape, including trees, rocks, and anything you've shot out of the sky, can be driven straight through, as if they don't exist, while others such as tiny bits of barbed wire, are completely immovable. The fiddly car handling and unreliable collision detection make precise manoeuvring (when trying to get a power-up, for example) unnecessarily difficult. It's a long way from *Halo*.

> **"AS A DRAGON IT'S POSSIBLE TO PICK UP OBJECTS SUCH AS ANIMALS OR SMALLER VEHICLES AND DROP THEM"**

LIFE'S A DRAG
The game has its moments, though, the best of which happen after you've disposed of all the humans versus dragons missions. After that, you get to fly the winged devils themselves, blasting the living daylights out of the ant-like humans below. As a dragon it's possible to pick up objects such as animals or smaller vehicles, and drop them from a great height, right onto your foes. Those puny humans must think it's raining cattle! The dragon levels are much more enjoyable, and were they available from the start of the game, we suspect the last few human missions would go untouched in most people's copies.

It's nothing special, but it does at least join the select group of games that are arguably a lot more interesting than the movies they're based on. And if you never thought you'd see *Reign of Fire* mentioned in the same sentence as *GoldenEye*, read it and weep.

MARTIN KITTS



DRAGON FLY
To get to the decent part of the game, in which you pilot a dragon over the smouldering remains of a very foggy London, you've got to complete all nine basic human missions. The dragons are more destructive than their counterparts, although tagging anything with your fireballs can be a hit-and-miss affair. Mind you, they do look very fiery.

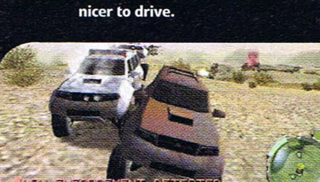


- Play as a dragon or a human.
- Lots of stuff to shoot.
- Different vehicles.



- You can't play as a dragon from the start.
- Very dodgy physics.
- Repetitive action.

IF YOU LIKE THIS…
Smuggler's Run
Take 2
NGC/73 78%
No shooting, but the vehicles are much nicer to drive.



5 VISUALS
There's a lot going on, and a lot of muddy, bland textures. Brown.



SOUNDS
The speech gets very annoying, but can be turned off.



MASTERY
Controls are poor, collision physics often frustrating.



LIFESPAN
The main reason to play through the first half is to get the dragons later.

VERDICT
A promising concept that offers some short-term thrills, but is ultimately let down by repetitive design and poor handling.





"Most people are born with the ability to play *Bomberman*"



TIMER
The timer, along with loads of other settings, can be customised before the match. You can specify game type, arena, and all sorts.

BLAST WAVES
With four players on the warpath, bombs will always get set off by chain reactions. Stay alert, bombermen.

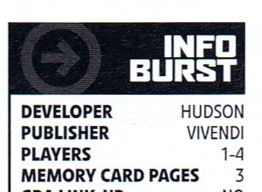
ON THE EDGE
After getting blown up, knackered bombermen can ride UFOs around the sides of the arena, lobbing bombs.

SOLO
The one-player game, with its cel-shaded graphics and simple puzzles, isn't dire, but it also isn't really Bomberman. Multiplayer is where it's at.

TACTICS
Think Bomberman is too basic? Try playing a bomber master, and see how tactical the game is. It's like chess. Erm… with bombs.

BOMBERMAN GENERATIONS

Primed and ready. The innocently explosive gaming franchise is back for another blast…



INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	HUDSON
PUBLISHER	VIVENDI
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	3
GBA LINK-UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Available now, if you fancy a little bit of bombing this Christmas. Also on US and Jap import.



COST: £40

What makes a multiplayer game that people will want to see more than once, and not leave as an unplayed option on the title screen? Among other things, we'd say it has to be fast – quick enough to play a round, and not have the early losers watch the clock, waiting for it to end so they can play again.

It should be easy to pick up, so you can introduce somebody to the basics, and have decent competition within a few minutes. And it should have loads of customisable options – there's nothing worse than getting lumbered with one particular aspect of the game that everyone finds annoying.

If this is the case, then *Bomberman* has the lot, and more. It's so incredibly simple, most people are probably born with the ability to play it. It's fun, it's immediate, and it fits perfectly into any multiplayer session you might care to organise. Friday night… a bit of *Timesplitters*… a few rounds of *Smash Bros*… some *Monkey Ball*… a quick *Bomberman* tournament, before nipping back to the old *Splitters*, then maybe some *ISS* or whatever…

But having seen so many *Bomberman* games over the years, it's now so familiar that it really doesn't amount to a great deal more than, say, a *Monkey Ball* minigame. Not necessarily a bad thing, but when it's backed up with a one-player mode that's typically ordinary *Bomberman* fare, even fans of the series might take some convincing before spending £40 on a game that isn't really any better than it was on the SNES ten years ago.

If you have to play alone, then at least *Bomberman Generations* offers computer-controlled opponents of various skill levels, as well as a selection of game variations – none of which work quite as intuitively as the plain old original mode.

There's a one-player adventure mode too, involving puzzles that don't bear much of a resemblance to the pure-and-simple mechanics of the battle game.

The circular explosions that have been employed since the N64 day are too hard to use with any sort of precision. You can't set off accurate long-distance chain reactions because you never know how far the explosion will spread. Fighting the many types of roaming enemy becomes a matter of kicking a bomb and hoping it explodes at the exact moment the target walks by.

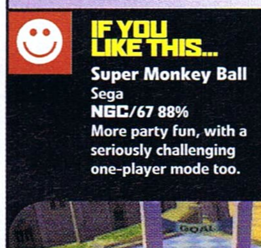
With four players, though, it's a different story. And if you're new to *Bomberman*…

MARTIN KITTS

+
- Still loads of fun to battle against four like-minded friends.
- Computer bots, too.



–
- The one-player mode isn't the best.
- Haven't you already played this years ago?



IF YOU LIKE THIS…
Super Monkey Ball
Sega
NGC/67 88%
More party fun, with a seriously challenging one-player mode too.

5 VISUALS
Very crisp in the solo mode, quite simple in multiplayer. Basic.

4 SOUNDS
Turn off the music and stick your favourite CD on the stereo.

5 MASTERY
It's solid, and at least they didn't mess up the four-player mode again.

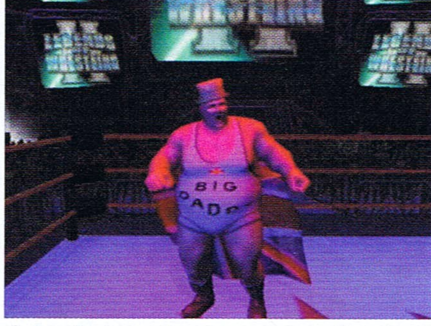
7 LIFESPAN
The long-term appeal of the odd battle during a multiplayer evening.

VERDICT
You probably won't play it for too long on your own, but get some mates round and it takes on a different complexion.

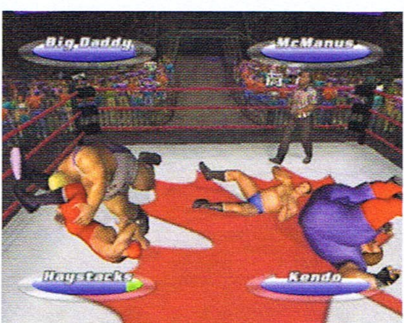




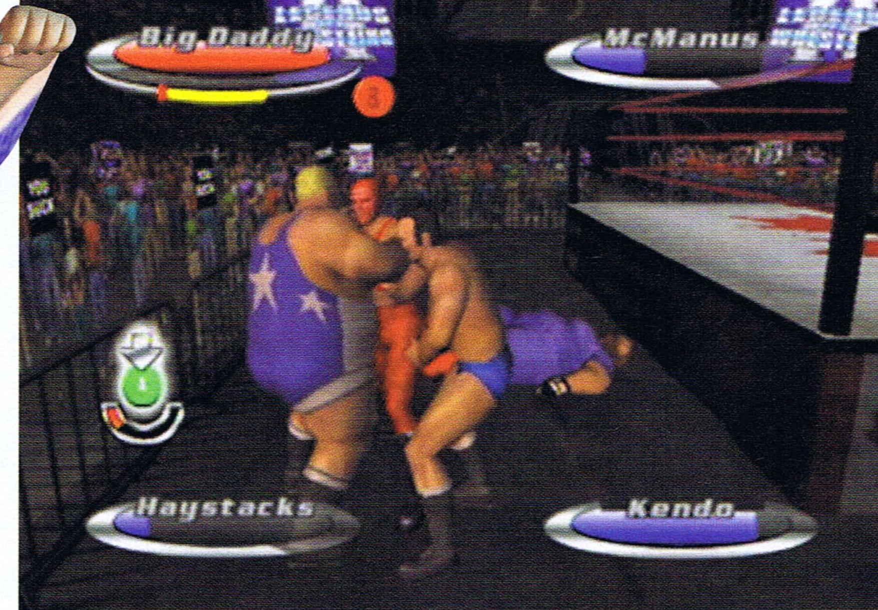




△ Somebody should make a cuter wrestling game than this. Maybe with Mario and Luigi. And Peach.

△ The Dadster decides to find out what Kendo had for breakfast. Eggs, you say? Phew–ee!



△ Big Daddy takes on Nagasaki and McManus, as Giant Haystacks decides to take a brief nap. Easy, easy, easy (as the crowds used to chant during Big Daddy's real matches. They don't in the game, of course).

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING II

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	ACCLAIM
PUBLISHER	ACCLAIM
PLAYERS	1–4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	9
GBA LINK–UP	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Should be in all good wrestling stores right now, if our calendar is working properly.



COST: £40

Grease up your leotard and pull on that face–mask, as Big Daddy and Kendo Nagasaki grapple with Gamecube.

Remember the days when wrestling was cheap, cheerful and British? Watch ITV on any Saturday afternoon in the early '80s, and you'd see crowds of goggle-eyed grannies, packed into a dingy leisure-centre sports hall, waving their brollies as fat men in leotards pretended to beat each other to a pulp.

It was a world away from the glitz of the WWF, and we mention it because this game's major selling point is a nostalgic reappearance of the late, lamented Big Daddy and Giant Haystacks, plus masked man of mystery Kendo Nagasaki. And Mike McManus, too.

But apart from that, you might as well be playing any ordinary American wrestling game. It's all about huge arenas and flashy introductions, except with a roster of retired or deceased stars. The British characters don't have their signature moves, and Big Daddy without his belly splash is like Blackpool without its tower.

> "IT'S ALL ABOUT HUGE ARENAS AND FLASHY INTROS, WITH A ROSTER OF RETIRED OR DEAD CHARACTERS"

Still, it's nice to see them all again, and if this paves the way for a future World of Sport wrestling licence then so much the better. Of course, we'd hope for a far better fighting engine than this one. Despite the large number of wrestlers, the range of options, and the comprehensive character creation mode, it just isn't all that great to play. It's slow and unresponsive, even by wrestling game standards. The collision detection is as dubious as it was in the previous instalment.

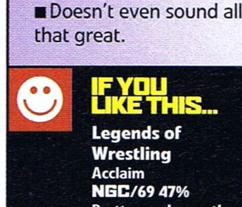
In fact, virtually everything seems to have been taken from the original *Legends of Wrestling* and shoved into this game, with no noticeable improvements other than the number of wrestlers available.

If you're desperate for some retro wrestling action, this is worth considering as a collector's piece. But if you're not all that bothered about nostalgia (or wrestling), then it's two falls, one submission and a knockout for *Legends of Wrestling II*.

MARTIN KITTS

+
- Big Daddy, Kendo Nagasaki, and lots of other classic wrestlers.

–
- Doesn't look great.
- Doesn't play great.
- Doesn't even sound all that great.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Legends of Wrestling
Acclaim
NGC/69 47%
Pretty much exactly the same game.



4 VISUALS
The wrestlers don't appear to hit each other, and it's very slow.

4 SOUNDS
Grunts. groans, announcers and crowd noises. Uninspiring.

3 MASTERY
It's the same game that was released in the summer. The same!

5 LIFESPAN
Hidden wrestlers to unlock. But don't expect loads of fun doing it.

VERDICT
Minor changes to an ordinary wrestling game, with some new characters and stuff. More a version 1.1 than a proper sequel.







△ If that's a corpse, it'll be gone about two nanoseconds from now.



△ The game never seemed to look this good when it was in motion.



△ The silenced machine guns sound like a fat man crushing Sugar Puffs between his butt cheeks.



△ Teach those terrorist scumbags some justice.

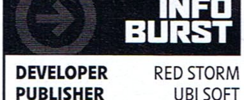


△ Turn off the night vision and the game looks great.



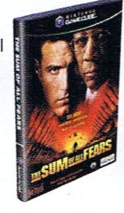
△ Follow the white line on the map, not your dozy pals.

THE SUM OF ALL FEARS


INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	RED STORM
PUBLISHER	UBI SOFT
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	10
GBA LINK-UP	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Right now, assuming the Quality Control Police haven't impounded it in solitary confinement.



COST: £40

Feel the fear, as Gamecube cops a big-name title with all the production values of a budget release. At full price!

If you've owned a console or PC during the last few years, chances are you'll have played and enjoyed one of the many Tom Clancy adaptations. The most notable being *Rainbow Six*, of which this is a simplified reworking.

Although doing away with all the tricky tactical stuff sounds like a great way to introduce the series to a new audience, something, somewhere went horribly wrong, and the Gamecube version is dire.

For starters, you have to fight against the controls to get your character to do anything useful. Movement is so slow and jerky, it feels like one of the sneaky terrorist foes has coated the floor in superglue.

The artificial intelligence is similarly rubbish. Your crack anti-terrorist team-mates stagger around, bashing into walls, and generally getting in the way. Shoot one of the equally oblivious terrorists and your buddies will mutter muffled words of congratulation, like some lethal Beavis & Buttheads. "Another kill." Hurr hurr. Hurr.

Dead enemies drop to the ground with no discernable death animation. If they're shot on a staircase, they'll fall straight through it, sparing them the indignity of vanishing into thin air the moment they hit the deck.

It's supposed to be a stealth game, but the bad guys won't notice your team until you walk up behind them and shoot them in the arse, at which point they'll turn around very slowly, like broken cardboard cut-outs at a firing range. You'll sometimes need to execute some of your own mates too, when they get too eager and start crowding around a locked door, preventing you from opening it. The others won't mind you wasting the odd one or two. They've all been lobotomised anyhow.

It just reeks of cheapness. The concept is actually good, and we remember when the *Rainbow Six* games were something out of the ordinary, filling a little of the gap between *GoldenEye* and *Perfect Dark*.

But this one's so badly put together, it's not worth considering, even (or, more to the point, especially) if you're a fan of the series.

MARTIN KITTS


■ Terrorists, elite teams and one-shot kills.
■ The memory of when these games were good.


■ So technically inept, it seems as if Tom Clancy coded this himself. In BASIC.


IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Rainbow Six
Take 2
NGC/35 87%
Superior N64 Clancy shooter, from this time in 1999.



2 VISUALS
Jerks around like you wouldn't believe. Will give you a headache.

3 SOUNDS
Gunshots that sound like they're recorded in a toilet cubicle.

2 MASTERY
Whoah! AI and graphics like it's running on a ten-year-old PC.

3 LIFESPAN
You'll get soon fed up struggling with this little shocker.

VERDICT
Stick this in your disc tray and it's like somebody has poured sugar in your Cube's petrol tank. Now get it out of our sight.



25



"Does its job diligently, if unspectacularly"



△ Looks like Donald is unleashing some *Eternal Darkness* magic.



△ Nobody cares about these generic rabbits and dogs. We wanted famous faces.



△ An opportunity wasted, but not a bad game at the end of the day.



△ You don't see this sort of thing in the Premiership. Not even at Man U.




△ Mickey unleashes a stinger from close to the penalty spot.

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	KONAMI
PUBLISHER	KONAMI
PLAYERS	1-4
MEMORY CARD PAGES	10
GBA LINK-UP	YES
WIDESCREEN	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Out now in Japan, as *Disney Sports Soccer*, or at the end of January over here.



COST: £40

DISNEY SPORTS FOOTBALL

The mouse turns professional, but where's the supporting cast?

While Konami's cartoon cutie does actually play a fairly decent game of arcade-style footie, we're sure many Disney fans will class it as a brilliant opportunity gone begging.

There simply aren't enough characters, and you only get one recognisable star per team. Once you've seen Mickey, Minnie, Donald, Daisy and Goofy, all that's left are three lesser characters (Mortimer Mouse, anyone?), and a whole bunch of identical animals filling in the remaining spots in the eight teams on offer. Perhaps the terms of the licence precluded the use of, say, a Snow White team, complete with dwarves and evil queen, playing against a Jungle Book select XI with Mowgli and his pals, but that's surely Disney's own fault – the game falls under their Disney Interactive umbrella. They deserve a big thumbs down for short-changing the cartoon-loving public.

> **"THERE SIMPLY AREN'T ENOUGH CHARACTERS – YOU ONLY GET ONE RECOGNISABLE STAR PER TEAM"**

So much for that. Instead, what we've got is a competent, highly simplified football game that's unlikely to blast *FIFA* off the map, but does offer some short-term fun.

Just about everything is controlled by simple combinations of A, B and the shoulder buttons, and it's very easy to learn how to do passes, crosses and shots. In fact the computer seems to help out most of the time, selecting the most appropriate moves on your behalf.

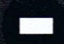
By winning tournaments, it's possible to unlock new abilities for various members of the teams. You definitely need them, as without some form of leveller such as an unstoppable power shot, the matches can often degenerate into a frenzy of crunching midfield fouls. We didn't see so much as a yellow card either, despite repeatedly using the speedy Donald to do a Roy Keane job on the hapless Mickey.

It's for kids, obviously, and it does its job diligently, if unspectacularly. Shame about the shortage of Disney stars, though.

MARTIN KITTS



- Cute to look at, easy to play.
- Upgrades and cards to unlock.



- Only eight proper Disney stars, and only one per team.
- Quite basic.



IF YOU LIKE THIS...
FIFA 2003
EA
NGC/75 83%
Surprisingly, the best (just) footie sim on Gamecube.



7 VISUALS
Solid cartoon animals with some nice touches of animation.



6 SOUNDS
The music can get tiresome, but the voices are alright.



6 MASTERY
You rarely get enough time on the ball, and the controls are limited.

7 LIFESPAN
Tournaments, customisation and GBA bonus options.

VERDICT
Not bad at all. We honestly aren't shivering at the thought of seeing the rest of the Disney Sports series.

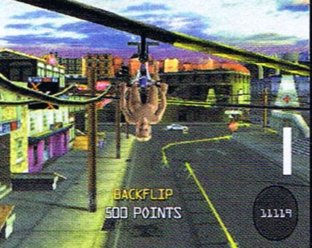




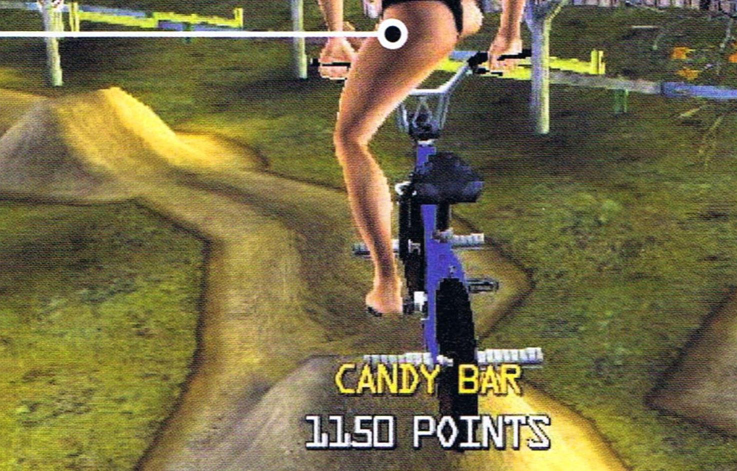


OBJECTIVES
Scattered all over the place. But the levels aren't all that busy, with loads of dead zones.

HELLO, SAILOR
Use the create-a-rider feature to make semi-naked ladies! Woo! Sadly you can only create mingers with stumpy legs, severe upper-body deformities and suspicious stains around their badly drawn arses. Geraint loves them.

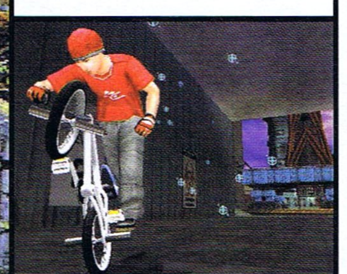




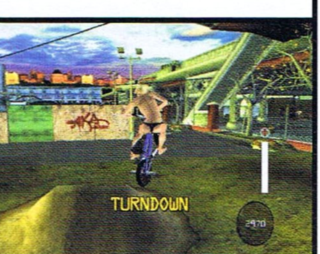




PEOPLE
Skate up to certain characters and they'll give you a timed task to perform. Now bust some BMX ass! Yo!



HEALTH METER
The only thing that can bring your run to an end. Too many crashes and you have to start all over again.



BMX XXX

Tricks with bikes, tricks with hookers, and the most hilarious adult game ever made. Or not.



INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	Z-AXIS
PUBLISHER	ACCLAIM
PLAYERS	1
MEMORY CARD PAGES	18
GBA LINK-UP	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Should be in the shops right now. Or you could just spend the money on jazz magazines.

COST: £40



In real life, if some stranger asked us to ghost-ride a bike into a fruit-booter, we'd probably stare vacantly for a moment, before backing away from the lunatic, making slow, deliberate movements so as not to scare him into a Rain Man-style fit of self-abuse.

This being a game, however, and the pay-off being the chance to see a clip of a *genuine lady* getting her kit off in some filthy lap-dancing joint, we felt compelled to consult the internet. Armed with the requisite BMX knowledge, we did a fine job of ghost-riding the aforementioned booter, and proceeded directly to the strip club for our reward.

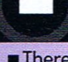
And what a let-down it was. About ten seconds of some fully-clothed girl grinning at the camera, before the whole thing cut out and we realised we'd have to complete task after tedious task to get anything worth seeing. Even then, it's no more XXX than something you'd see on a Sunday afternoon on Channel Five, and when the game is just a sub-standard rehash of *Dave Mirra*, we'll give it a miss, thankyouverymuch.

BMX 15 Certificate would have been more like it. The characters say *swear words*, and rather than have tasks like 'collect S-K-A-T-E', you get 'ferry five prostitutes to a brothel'. Hilarious! What will they think of next?

How about a comedy hot-dog salesman who keeps shouting something about his 'wieners'? Or a task where (get this) you have to stop a dog from crapping in the park? And why not dress it up in rubbish graphics, with low-res textures too?

Poor taste is no excuse for a XXXX game.

MARTIN KITTS



+
- Tried and tested game engine.
- Great humour, if you're about ten years old.

–
- There's nothing remotely XXX about it.
- Levels aren't designed very well.

IF YOU LIKE THIS...
Aggressive Inline
Acclaim
NGC/72 81%
Better graphics, better levels, much more enjoyable.



5 VISUALS
Low-polygon models with horrible chunky textures. Not great.

4 SOUNDS
Do 'da kids' in America still think Green Day is rebellious music?



4 MASTERY
Not half as good as the same developer's other titles. A quick cash-in.

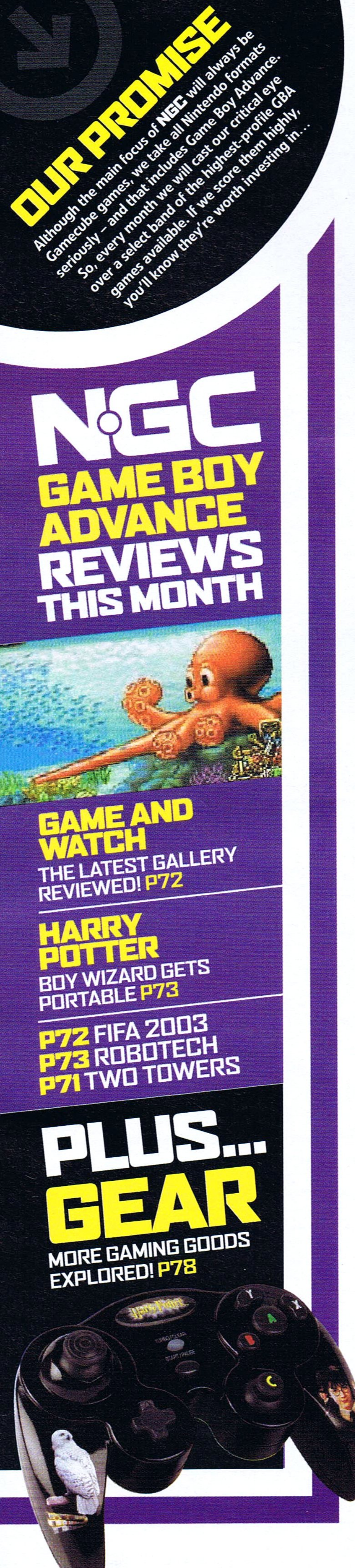


6 LIFESPAN
If you really want to see the strip clips, you'll have to finish the game.

VERDICT
This is stupid. What next? *Super Mario XXX*, with 'Love Toad' and a naked Peach? Hang on a minute. This one's got legs...









△ A classic, and a fondly-remembered one at that, *Doom II* might be familiar but it's ace.



△ Imps! Imps! Imps! And so on. As well as a giant flaming skull with horns. Gnurk, tsk, etc.



△ There's nothing more exhilarating than hacking though ten rugby teams' worth of imps, pink hell pigs, zombie marines and robot spider demons with a smoking chainsaw. It's pixellated giblet mayhem!



△ Too young to remember *Doom II* when it came around the first time? Then enjoy it now. Now!



△ The pleasingly-named Cacodemon. It's big, it's round, it bounces along the ground. Possibly.



△ Imps! Imps! Imps! And so on. Hang on, haven't we been here before? Cute lil' fellas, though. Um.

INFO BURST

FORMAT	GBA
FROM	ACTIVISION
PLAYERS	1-4
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	YES
SAVE	CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

DOOM II

Chainguns, rocket launchers, demon spawn for days… it's a helluva second outing for id's mini marine.



Ah, the nostalgia of stuffing a chainsaw through the middle of an invisible pinky demon, the warm familiarity of dodging multiple fireballs, the enigma that is the '80% secrets found'…

Praise the dark masters of the underworld and pass the ammunition. Everything's here – with the exception of red blood (wusses) – and everything's still moving at the kind of pace that leaves other shoot-'em-ups catching their breath. It's remarkable that sprawling 3D environments should make it over to GBC in such an unscathed state. In fact, the only real problem that drags the whole experience down visually is the game's original colour scheme. Even in the best light, there are times when you're not sure what you're looking at or which way you're facing. Fine if you're plodding about locating a key but, in the middle of a firefight, it always results in you taking more damage than you should.

There's also no getting away from the fact that, as far as sequels go, this isn't a great departure from the winning formula that made the original such a hit. What it does have, though, is an improved combination of monster types and choice weaponry to splatter them with. The creatures may not have the smarts of any modern-day shooter, but their variance and different attack styles really stretch the way you play. From learning to dodge missiles to circle strafing those relentless floating eyes, there's enough here to distance the game from any shooter that just favours human-styled opponents.

"IT MOVES AT THE KIND OF PACE THAT LEAVES OTHER SHOOT-'EM-UPS CATCHING THEIR BREATH"

That said, things have moved on since *Doom* arrived on GBC last year. While this still beats titles such as *Dark Arena* hands down, we now have *Duke Nukem Advance* offering pipe bombs and the ability to jump, whereas *Ballistic: Ecks vs Sever* provides a more satisfying multiplayer. Fair reasons for heading elsewhere. However, when you take into account this can still grab you, despite being eight years old, you can't help but get involved even if *Doom* is already part of your cart library.



DID YOU KNOW? Doom was first released in the year 1BC by Joseph of Arimathea. This would explain the primitive graphics and lack of mouselook. Cough.



△ He's also got the best haircut this side of that bloke from Slade. Look at it! Look! Look! And so on.



△ We're not sure exactly what's going on here, but it looks exciting. Doesn't it? Yes. It does.



△ That's a lot of limbs for the Forbidden One. Does he really need them all? Greedy so-and-so.

YU-GI-OH
DARK DUEL STORIES



FORMAT	GBA
FROM	KONAMI
PLAYERS	1-2
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	YES
SAVE	CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

The game of the cards of the Japanese TV series unleashed.



A boy called Yugi, an artefact called the Millennium Puzzle and another stack of angry little monstrosities out to rip each into pieces. Where this departs from the Pokémon card-fighting system is in the multiple ways you can improve the quality and quantity of cards in your deck.

You can trade them with mates via the link cable. You can win creature parts from the game's campaign mode and use them to construct new horrors. You can even key in eight-digit passwords off the real-world cards and import the monsters from them into the game. Inventive stuff no doubt, but why did it all have to arrive in such a pug-ugly package?

The animations are basic – we're talking blinky eyes, wobbly mouths and little else here – and the unattractive way the cards are organised makes your GBC feel more like a Rolodex than a fantastic games console.

Ignore the looks, if you can, and there are a great number of tactical sweet spots to uncover. So, ugly yes, but compulsive as well.





△ Look! It's just like the film! If the film was small and pixelly and not very good. Hmm.



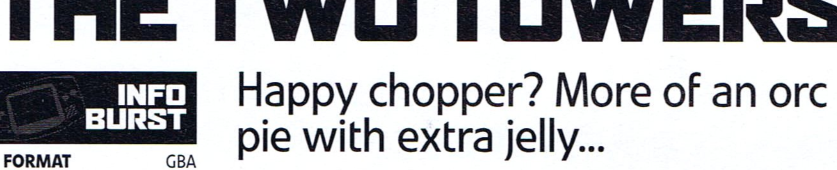
△ The smooshed green mess is presumably an orc, and the result of much careless swordplay.



△ A very picturesque winter scene, about to be soiled by blood, guts and other such matter.



△ Our heroes are surrounded by evildoers. There's but one option – kill them all! All! Aaallll!



THE LORD OF THE RINGS THE TWO TOWERS



FORMAT	GBA
FROM	EA
PLAYERS	1-2
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	YES
SAVE	CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

Happy chopper? More of an orc pie with extra jelly...

The problem with *The Lord of the Rings* is that, being the grandaddy of influences for all RPGs, there's nothing here we haven't seen before. EA's title heads back to the dark ages of carrion crows (chop), goblins (chop, chop) and orcs (pass the axe, would you?). It's all very hack-'n'-slash with a squirt of both magic and equipment management to distract from the fact that you spend most of your time lumping the B-button.

You get the option of playing as one of five characters from the film – Aragorn, Gandalf, Legolas, Eowyn and Frodo – and the game's use of skill sets brings a decent mix of combat styles to the repeated slaughter. Steer Aragorn up through the levels, for instance, and he'll eventually be able to use two weapons simultaneously or stun crowds of orcs with one smart bomb-styled blow. The downturn is, once you've selected a character, you're with them for the duration, which would have put the dampeners on replay value if it wasn't for the fact that playing as either Frodo and Eowyn results in the odd branching plot line.

There are a few other remarkable touches – the inclusion of some hidden environmental features, a musical score that slides effortlessly between eerie and heroic and some fantastic voice sampling – but, for our money, we'd opt for Vivendi's less polished yet slightly more adventurous take on the books, any day of the week.



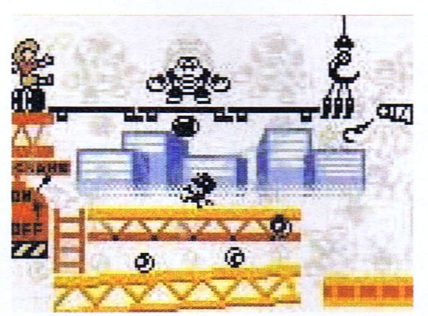
△ It's hack-'n'-slash action with added magic and adventure.



"*FIFA*'s not a bad little runaround. Honest!"



△ It's so primitive it's almost laughable. But that old Nintendo gameplay magic is still there.



△ It looks like Mario – just about. Unbelievably old-fashioned but darn good fun nonetheless.



△ A giant octopus! Can't he see it? What's he doing? Is he mad? Mario, watch out! MARIO! MARIOOO!

GAME & WATCH GALLERY



FORMAT	GBA
FROM	NINTENDO
PLAYERS	1–2
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	YES
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

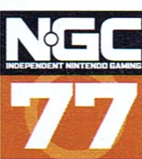
Six classic old skool games stand up to be counted…

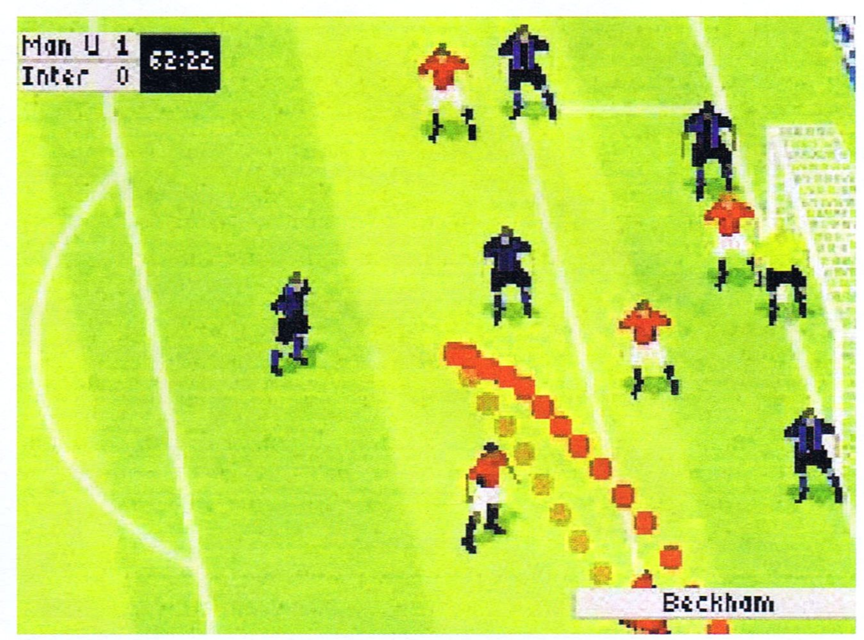


That good old golden Nintendo Seal of Quality still stands for something, you know. So while these six old-skool-as-you-like Game & Watch updates are, on one level, remnants of a gaming era gone by, they're still remarkably good fun to play. But what more would you expect of 'proper' Nintendo games?

Of the six starting titles, *Boxing, Mario's Cement Factory* and *Donkey Kong 3* are perhaps brief distractions, but *Rain Shower* and *Fire* both have that particular Game Boy *Tetris* addiction factor. In *Donkey Kong Jr* you have a genuine classic.

Then there are the superbly authentic Game & Watch graphics – accurate even down to the shaded silhouettes of movement in the background. Add 11 further games and a host of extras to unlock, as well as modern updates of the titles which vary the game dynamics, and you've got one slyly addictive little package to put a smile on your face. Just like all the best games do.





△ As in real life, the ball leaves an echoing red trail and little red shadows. Football, eh? Crazy.

INFO BURST

FORMAT	GBA
FROM	EA
PLAYERS	1–2
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

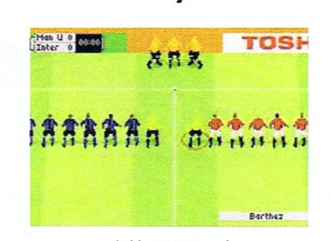
FIFA 2003

Everyone's favourite (no, really) licence returns to the fray.



It's *FIFA*, so it's a crime against the humanity of the beautiful game, right? Not quite, because as a portable football fix the latest instalment of EA's love-to-loathe-'em footie franchise isn't actually too bad at all. Sure, it still contains The Most Imbecilic Design Flaw In A Game Ever (the insistence on having to manually switch between players), the dimensions of the pitch seem too small, and the dynamics feel like you're kicking a weighty ball of lead about, but really, when all's said and done *FIFA Football* is not a bad little runaround. Honest guv!





Admittedly, a lot of the charm comes from the licence – so it's Veron to Van Nistelrooy to slot it past Seaman – but with *ISS* being a bit of a failure on GBA, this may be the early winner by default. So while the GBA community waits for that real fox-in-the-box predator of a handheld footie sim, *FIFA* has staked its claim as flavour of the month. The boy's not done too bad… this time.





Geraint loves Robotech. Loves it. Who'd have thought that of a youngster from the Welsh valleys?



INFO BURST

FORMAT	GBA
FROM	TDK
PLAYERS	1–2
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

ROBOTECH THE MACROSS SAGA

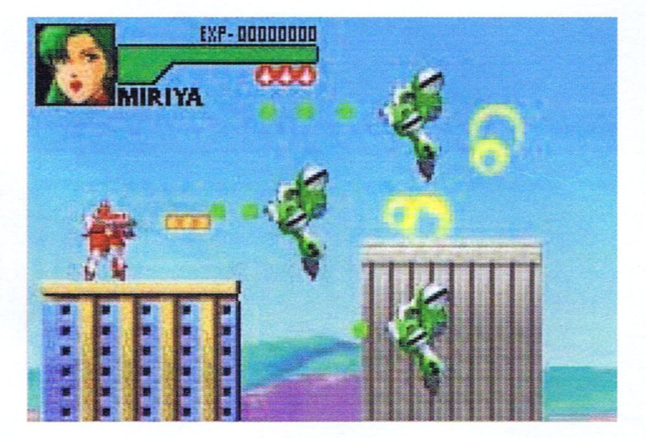
Side-scrolling mech warrior flatters to deceive. Boo…

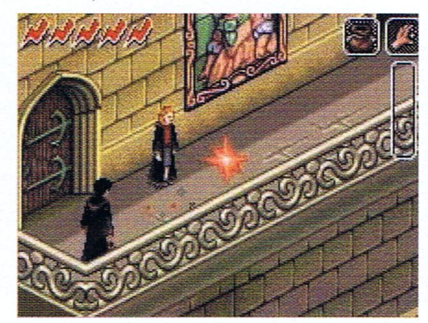
Why do so many potentially stonking gaming ideas fail to make the transition from ideas stage to the actual finished game? Take Robotech as an example. As you blast away in the side-scrolling sections, you can transform into one of three fighter modes: Fighter, Battloid and Guardian. However, there's no need to deviate from Guardian mode, and you find yourself switching to the ground-based Battloid for a while out of boredom, rather than for any strategic reason.

The lack of a balanced transformation dynamic isn't the only thing to betray *Robotech*'s rich anime heritage, though. The eye candy is disappointing, with uninspired sprites lacking character and some weedy attempts at pyrotechnics. There are unwanted interjections into isometric hell as you hit a planet's surface to continue your mission. These sections seem to be there to add longevity, but actually serve to dull the action even further still. Grrr.

It's a shame, as the nucleus of a great game is here.






Making magic in the hallowed halls of Hogwarts. A very pretty red thing, anyway.


We'd wager this is either at the Weasleys or Hagrid's hut. Are we right? Huh? Huh?


The reviewer's opinions concerning 'the little twerp of a geek' are not those of Team NGC. Hup.


It's a gorgeous-looking game, but one devoid of much in the way of thrills, unfortunately.

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS



INFO BURST

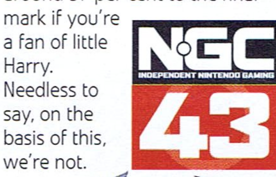
FORMAT	GBA
FROM	EA
PLAYERS	1
SINGLE-CART	
LINK UP	NO
SAVE	ON CART
OUT	NOW
COST	£30

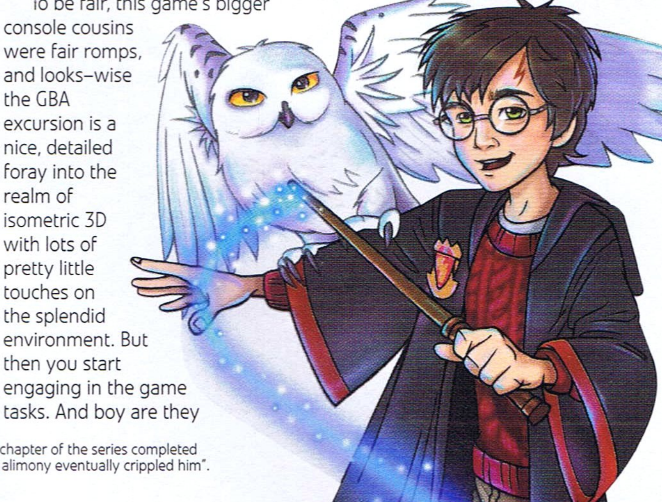
So is the boy wizard game enough to advance?

Somewhere in the Gaming Reviewer's Handbook and Rules of Etiquette it probably states that you shouldn't be biased against a title simply on account of its lead character. Yet it's hard to be objective when it comes to the boy Potter. How an infuriating little twerp of a geek has captured the world's attention and money is beyond us, but the Potterer brings our blood to the boil, so expectations were never high here. (*Easy, tiger! – Ed*)

To be fair, this game's bigger console cousins were fair romps, and looks-wise the GBA excursion is a nice, detailed foray into the realm of isometric 3D with lots of pretty little touches on the splendid environment. But then you start engaging in the game tasks. And boy are they monotonous. Enter a shop; talk to someone inside; find out they've lost their pet toad; venture into dungeon to find said toad; then return slippery beast to original person. Repeat a couple more times to complete the game. Like, yawn.

Of course, you should add around 57 per cent to the final mark if you're a fan of little Harry. Needless to say, on the basis of this, we're not.






DID YOU KNOW? JK Rowling, the insanely rich creator of Harry Potter, has the final chapter of the series completed and sealed inside a bank vault. We bet it doesn't say "And it was all a dream", or "the alimony eventually crippled him".

"You can't argue with seven games out of the box"

△ The chaos emeralds. Grab them all for the best ending.

△ *Sonic 3D* plays differently. You have to free the flickies from Dr Robotnik.



△ *Sonic Spinball* is possibly the worst game of the lot, but stick with it and it does improve… a little.

△ The one thing we always loved about the 2D Sonic games (and thus hated in the 3D ones) was the music. Hearing it again warmed the very cockles of our hearts.



△ *Sonic 3*: the pinnacle of his Mega Drive adventures.

SONIC MEGA COLLECTION

Over seven Sonics on one disc! Time to take a trip down Mega Drive memory lane…

INFO BURST

DEVELOPER	SONIC TEAM
PUBLISHER	SEGA
PLAYERS	1-2
MEMORY CARD PAGES	2
GBA LINK-UP	NO
WIDESCREEN	NO
SURROUND SOUND	NO

WHEN'S IT OUT?
Not announced over here yet, but out in the US and Japan.

COST: $50

Well. This has certainly made us smile. From the familiar loading screen "Saaay-gaaaah" chimes to the chirpy theme accompanying Sonic's finger-wagging, a warm, some would say comforting, wind of nostalgia swept through the office and brought memories flooding back. Whether these were fond ones was a different matter – Kittsy was disgusted by the sight of it, declaiming that "this game should never have existed".

"THIS BROUGHT SOME MEMORIES BACK. WHETHER THESE WERE FOND ONES WAS A DIFFERENT MATTER..."

He could have a point. It may ring true for some, but there are millions of other gamers out there who would disagree. It all depends on which camp you're in. If you hate Sonic, then playing this will seem like some terrible form of punishment. Conversely, if you can still remember the theme from Green Hill Zone or feel that Dr Robotnik should *never* have changed his name, then you'll be right at home here.

Regardless, you can't argue with seven games straight out of the box. Four of them

THE FAST-TASTIC FOUR

Stand-out moments from the *Sonic* selection…



MEAN BEAN MACHINE
It's Puyo Puyo but it's still as addictive as ever. You and a mate can spend hours on this.



SONIC 3
Beautiful, innovative and full of great surprises. It's also very, very challenging.



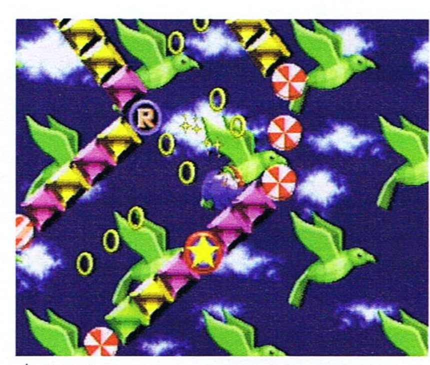
FLICKY
Guide a bird around and save chicks from cats. Silly, yet brutally addictive gaming.



RISTAR
Little-known and under-appreciated. We'd totally forgotten how great this was.



△ Although none of the games have aged particularly well, they're all very easy on the eye.



△ Rotating maze of doom – how we hate you.



△ The most enduring image of Sonic. For many in the early 90s the Green Hill Zone was their first ever taste of gaming.

(The original *Sonic* through to *Sonic and Knuckles*) are straight-up 'classic' Sonic side-scrollers. The latter three are the addictive *Puyo Puyo, Dr Robotnik's Mean Bean Machine*, the decidedly average *Sonic Spinball* and the enjoyable *Sonic 3D Blast*. All the emulation on each title is spot-on, so they look exactly as they always did. There are no graphical upgrades in any way, shape or form, and bizarrely, even the slowdown seems to remain intact.

SONIC'S YOUTH

There's a huge amount of gaming on one disc – with stand-out titles like the wonderful *Sonic 2* and *3* and *Mean Bean Machine* being worth the asking price alone. Sega have also squeezed in a few extras to beef up the disc. There's a History of Sonic section, illustrations and literally hundreds of pages of comic cover art to flick through, as well as five unlockable games – *Ristar, Flicky, Blue Sphere, Sonic and Knuckles 2 and 3* – to access. Granted, only a couple of them are really worth your while – the latter two being old Sonic games playable with Knuckles rather than Sonic – but it's a satisfyingly generous package.

But is it worth forking out for? Well, yes. And no. The games haven't aged particularly well – that's not to say they play badly – but after running them on a Gamecube after playing more recent Sonic outings such as *Sonic Advance* on GBA, they looked more dated than we anticipated. Having said that, they still play well, and going through each in turn will be a wonderful experience for dewy-eyed fans consumed by nostalgia. *Sonic 3* in particular still holds some very fresh and innovative touches that current developers would do well to make note of. Furthermore, if you've only ever played Sonic's *Adventure* titles, it's a great way to discover the blue hog's roots, and the reason why his transition to 3D wasn't quite as smart a move as people think.

But you'll have probably made up your mind about whether you want this or not already. If it's retro thrills you're after, you won't be disappointed; if the idea of creaky old platformers confuses and disgusts you, it's doubtful you'll have the patience to go through everything in its entirety.

GERAINT EVANS

ENCORE

Sonic Team have rarely been forthcoming with the extras. Admittedly, this is a decent Sonic anthology, but why the hell has Sonic CD – arguably the best Sonic game ever – not been included? Some interviews with Yuji Naka would have been nice, and the omission of concept art is practically criminal.



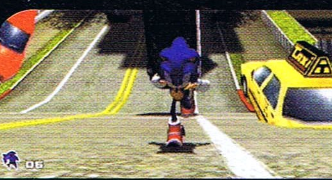
- Over seven games!
- Loads of Sonic history for the nostalgic.
- Faithfully emulated.



- If you loath Sonic this will make you feel ill.
- *Sonic Spinball.*
- Feels ten years old. Is.



IF YOU LIKE THIS…
Sonic Adventure 2
Sega
NGC/65 70%
3D Sonic. Entertaining, but uninspired and frustrating.



3 VISUALS
16-bit sprites, 16-bit backgrounds, and 16-bit Mega Drive visuals.

3 SOUNDS
Nice and familiar, but reeks of the age that it came from.

2 MASTERY
They've kept all the slowdown – and it has to LOAD, ferchrissake!

9 LIFESPAN
If you love this stuff, it'll last for ever. Fantastic value for money.

VERDICT
You either want it or you don't. If you've long since ditched your Mega Drive and hanker for a slice of gaming's golden age, it's worth it.



71

FIVE FOR A PRIZE!

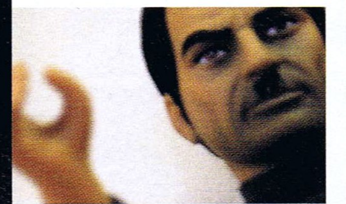
Of course, we could easily sit around all day making Top 5 lists, like crazed list-addicted John Cusack. In fact, we often do. But, as ever, we want YOU to do the work now. You've seen the format over the past few months, so send in your own Top 5 lists. If we use yours, you might win something 'interesting'... Good luck, children! Mwahahaha...

NGC ESSENTIAL

THE BEST CUBE GAMES MONEY CAN BUY...

TOP FIVE THINGS IN THE NGC OFFICE. WAH!

The **NGC** office is a haven to many objects strange enough to defy all description. So strange, they can only be referred to as mere 'things'. Here are the most interesting five...



CAPTAIN BLACK



I AM GNOME



THE BOND HAT



THE DREAMCAST GERAINT BROKE



DOUGHNUTS. MMM, DOUGHNUTS



1 MARIO SUNSHINE

NINTENDO ■ NGC/73 96

The wait may have been long, but by Mike was it worth it. Mazza makes his first proper appearance on a Nintendo console in the follow-up to *Super Mario 64* – this time he's cleaning up oily muck on a tropical island and trying to find out what evil villain put it there. With the same pick-up-and-play intuitiveness, polished Nintendo visuals, and sense of pure fun, this one pushes all the right buttons.

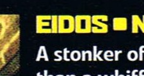


2 SUPER SMASH BROS MELEE

NINTENDO ■ NGC/68 95

Eye-singeing multiplayer battles, ingenious moves, brilliant cameo appearances from about every Nintendo character ever, plus some of the sweetest looks yet squeezed from the Cube – *Smash Bros* is everything you went purple for and more.

3 TIMESPLITTERS 2



EIDOS ■ NGC/73 92

A stonker of a time-travelling FPS with more than a whiff of *GoldenEye*, *TS2* crept out of nowhere to officially become Gamecube's finest example of the genre – and with *Perfect Dark* destined for the Bill Box, it looks as if it's here to stay.

4 WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM



NINTENDO ■ NGC/67 91

In PAL form this sodden sequel might suffer from some *tiny* frame-rate problems, but it's still a fabulous racer, replete with *the* most incredible water effects ever. Fast, dynamic, accessible and sublime to control, *Wave Race* is absolute magic.

5 LUIGI'S MANSION





NINTENDO ■ NGC/67 90

Mazza might have been late to the party this time round, but brother Luigi managed to ease the pain with this fantastically playable combination of *Super Mario World* and Ghostbusters. It's maybe a bit short, but still ace.



6 RESIDENT EVIL





CAPCOM ■ NGC/72 89

The classic zombie-horror fear-fest recreated to take advantage of the Cube's superior electrical witchcraft. Stunning, mesmerising visuals, unrivalled atmosphere and a brilliant storyline. Shame it still has the old-fashioned rotate-and-shoot control system from the dark PSone days, mind...

7 ETERNAL DARKNESS





NINTENDO ■ NGC/74 89

A rollicking Lovecraftian yarn of ancient evils coming home to roost that more than gives *Resi* a run for its money, replacing slick zombie-slaying action with a wonderfully creepy story told through a cast of 12 playable characters, and a truly innovative magic system. Get this one in...



8 SUPER MONKEY BALL





SEGA ■ NGC/67 88

Ingenious update of *Marble Madness*, with simians rolling around strange landscapes trying to collect 'nanas. Chuck in a monkey version of *Mario Kart*, pool, some golf and a tilting boxing ring with springy boxing gloves and you've got the weirdest, most wonderful Gamecube game out.

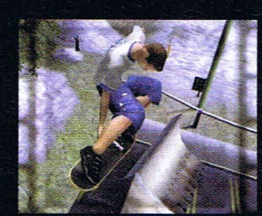
9 STAR WARS: ROGUE LEADER




ACTIVISION ■ NGC/68 **87**

One of the best-looking console games ever made (well, so far), *Rogue Leader* also happens to be one of the slickest, most memorable Star Wars games of all time, bolting eye-popping renditions of the Battle of Hoth and the Trench Run onto silky smooth space battles. Get it in now.

10 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

ACTIVISION ■ NGC/67 **87**

It's clearly a no-brainer of a PS2 conversion, but *Tony Hawk's 3* is so good it hardly seems to matter. Packed with unbelievable grinds and stunts, backed up by a mountain of hidden extras, and benefiting from vast skate parks, if you haven't tried *Hawk's* on for size before, now's the time.

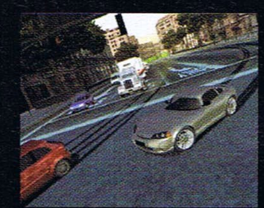
11 SSX TRICKY




EA SPORTS ■ NGC/69 **87**

Like *Tony Hawk's*, this has got PS2 written all over it in big, fat neon letters, but it still manages to perform wonders with your Cube. Fast, spectacular courses, brilliant shortcuts and secrets and some timely mid-piste scrappage make this conversion brilliant, *brilliant* entertainment.

12 BURNOUT

ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67 **86**

On the N64, we had to wait three years for a driving game. Now we've got a killer racer from day one: with lightning-fast, spectacular crashes, inch-perfect handling and one of the smoothest, most impressive engines around, *Burnout* is a dream of a game, even if it's over a bit quickly.



13 LOST KINGDOMS




ACTIVISION ■ NGC/70 **86**

Nerdy CCG-ing comes to the Cube in this surprisingly accomplished RPG, in which you collect cards and battle mythical monsters in pretty fantasy landscapes. Might not sound like much, but *Lost Kingdoms* is far more than the sum of its parts. Try it and you just might get hooked.



14 PIKMIN




NINTENDO ■ NGC/69 **85**

Dreamily created using textures from Shigsy's own garden, *Pikmin* is a genius real-time strategy with multi-coloured vegetables, beautifully simple controls and expansive, tactile worlds. It's over a bit quickly if truth be told, but don't let that put you off: this is Nintendo brilliance.

15 TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 4




ACTIVISION ■ NGC/75 **85**

The world's only skateboarder to be eligible for a Senior Citizen's Railcard (he's 35 this May…) stars in yet another boarding game. No time limits (hurrah!) and some great RPG elements and minigames complement the larger areas – a sterling refinement of an already classic series. Top hole, dude!

16 EXTREME G 3



ACCLAIM ■ NGC/67 **85**

A bit of an underrated gem, *Extreme G 3* offers pulse-shattering speed, huge, sprawling, well-designed tracks, some ingenious – and surprisingly tactical – weaponry and eye-spanking visuals. It's a tiny bit soulless, and the multiplayer's somewhat rank, but this is good stuff.

17 ISS 2



KONAMI ■ NGC/68 **83**

This once-untouchable football giant makes its debut on Gamecube sporting a few nasty cuts and bruises, including a lack of pace, huge turning circles and 'sweet spots'. Even so, it still rates as a majestic example of footie in a disc, even though an *ISS* with faults is hard to stomach.

18 FIFA 2003



EA ■ NGC/75 **83**

Who would-a thunk it? The year Konami slip up with a below-par *ISS* also happens to be the one where EA pull a version of *FIFA* that's actually smooth, playable and well put-together. Okay, so they both got the same mark, but by EA's past 'efforts' this is top-notch gimmick-free footie action.

19 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003




EA ■ NGC/75 **82**

Cablinasian golf robot Tiger Woods gets his own game – perhaps surprisingly, it's pretty good, too. With its slick visuals, masses of game modes, and plenty of lush fairways and greens to play on, *Mario Golf* is going to have its work cut out. The best spoiled walk on Gamecube by a country mile.

20 AGGRESSIVE INLINE




ACTIVISION ■ NGC/72 **81**

Pleasantly surprising roller-skating game from the same stable as *Dave Mirra*, that sensibly uses the tried-and-tested *Hawk's* formula, while remaining more accessible than it. Massive, challenge-filled arenas, no time limits, and unique, 'jiggling' physics make this a real alternative to The Tonester.

EVERY CAMECUBE GAME RATED!

Capcom Vs SNK 2	NGC/72, 79
Smuggler's Run	NGC/73, 79
Knockout Kings	NGC/75, 79
Beach Spikers	NGC/72, 79
Rocky	NGC/74, 78
Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer	NGC/72, 75
Dave Mirra 2	NGC/67, 75
Medal of Honor: Frontline	NGC/75, 74
Ace Golf	NGC/74, 74
Bloody Roar: Primal Fury	NGC/74, 74
James Bond 007: Nightfire	NGC/75, 72
Starfox Adventures	NGC/74, 72
Turok Evolution	NGC/73, 71
Top Gun: Combat Zones	NGC/72, 71
Star Wars: The Clone Wars	NGC/75, 71
Mystic Heroes	NGC/75, 71
Mat Hoffman's Pro BMX 2	NGC/75, 70
NBA Live 2003	NGC/75, 70
WWE X8	NGC/72, 70
Barbarian	NGC/72, 70
Batman Vengeance	NGC/67, 70
Need for Speed 2	NGC/74, 69
Godzilla: Destroy All Monsters Melee	NGC/74, 68
Mario Party 4	NGC/75, 68
Sega Soccer Slam	NGC/74, 67
Jedi Knight II	NGC/75, 67
NHL Hitz 20-03	NGC/74, 65
NHL 2003	NGC/75, 64
MX Superfly	NGC/73, 63
Worms Blast	NGC/74, 73
Doshin the Giant	NGC/74, 62
Driven	NGC/68, 60
Cel Damage	NGC/68, 60
Tarzan Freeride	NGC/67, 59
Pro Rally	NGC/74, 58
Spy Hunter	NGC/68, 55
X-Men: Next Dimension	NGC/75, 55
Taz Wanted	NGC/72, 52
The Simpsons: Road Rage	NGC/68, 52
Dark Summit	NGC/69, 51
Wreckless: The Yakuza Missions	NGC/75, 51
Virtua Striker 3 v2002	NGC/69, 50
Eggo Mania	NGC/72, 49
Pro Tennis WTA Tour	NGC/74, 48
Legends of Wrestling	NGC/69, 47
Hot Wheels: Velocity X	NGC/75, 45
Spyro: Enter the Dragonfly	NGC/75, 40
Crash Bandicoot: The Wrath of Cortex	NGC/75, 40
Tetris Worlds	NGC/73, 38
ESPN 2002	NGC/67, 37
Scooby Doo: Night of 100 Frights!	NGC/75, 36
Donald Duck Goin' Quackers	NGC/68, 32
2002 FIFA World Cup	NGC/69, 30
The Scorpion King	NGC/75, 30
Big Air Freestyle	NGC/75, 28
Mickey's Magical Mirror	NGC/73, 26
Gauntlet: Dark Legacy	NGC/68, 25
Universal Studios	NGC/67, 24
Jeremy McGrath Supercross World	NGC/69, 20

GEAR

The usual suspects of ugly plastic boxes, useless tat and rare gems. All must fight… but only one will survive!

WHAT IS A BEST BUY?

Every month we'll pick out one piece of kit that stands head and shoulders above the rest and award it our coveted Best Buy badge. A Best Buy will combine superb quality with fantastic value for money – when we hand something a reward like that, you know it's worth investing in.



SOUNDSTATION 2

FROM LOGIC 3 ● £49.99 ● TEL 020 8902 2211

Yeah, yeah we know. They look like they're for a PS2 and, er… they are. But they do work with a Gamecube and they're significantly better than Logic 3's own Soundstation 3, made 'specifically' for Gamecube. They also cost a tenner more, but they're a bit bigger and they don't sound as tinny as the SS3s. The only major problem is that they'll look a bit odd sat next to your Cube, and they don't sound that much better than Herao's alternative GC system.

MORE EXPENSIVE THAN…



HERAO GC SOUND SYSTEM
FROM HERAO ● £39.99
Hardly amazing – but then what do you expect for forty quid! Assuming you don't have a full-on cinema set-up at home, this will beef up your telly's sound quite nicely. Not bad at all.



HARRY POTTER PAD

FROM THRUSTMASTER ● £14.99 ● TEL 020 8655 1881

Ooooh. Classy! We certainly like the owl on the left prong, and the way you can see where your greasy mitts have been after touching its glossy surface. Apart from that, it's not that great. The pad itself falls foul in the same way 90 per cent of third-party pads do: it feels cheap, unbalanced and uncomfortable to hold, and has rubbish analogue sticks. if you're that obsessed about the Potterer, then the DVD, books or other forms of collectable wizard-related tat are a much wiser investment.

NOT AS GOOD AS…

PRO PAD
FROM LOGIC 3 ● £14.99
The most useable third-party joypad available. Not nearly up to the standard of the official pads, but if you're looking for a cheaper alternative this should be your first port of call.





HERAO GC SOUND SYSTEM

FROM HERAO ● £39.99 ● TEL 01827 703082

Another month, another set of budget speakers. These ones are pretty good, though. They distort a little if you crank them up full, although it's doubtful you'll need to go that loud anyway, and they offer decent clarity of sound. The unit itself is nicely styled, and sits well with your Gamecube. The speakers are pretty smart too, and are small enough to be sufficiently discreet if you don't have a massive amount of space to put them in.

BETTER THAN…



SOUNDSTATION 3 SPEAKER SYSTEM
FROM LOGIC 3 ● £39.99
Didn't seem so bad when it came out, but up against the newer breed of speakers it's been nudged down the pecking order somewhat. The runt of the litter.

WAVEBIRD

FROM NINTENDO ● £34.99 ● TEL 02380 623200

For those who have just woken from years of Rip Van Winkle-like slumber, the Wavebird is a wireless controller. No leads, just the power of science sending your commands to your Gamecube across something called 'air'. To get it to work you'll need two AA batteries – but they last for ages. So long, in fact, that we've not even had to change the ones in ours since we first got them six months ago, and we're always leaving them on, too. The only thing missing is the a rumble function, but unless you can't get enough of vibrating plastic then it's no real loss.

BETTER THAN...



CONTROLLERS WITH WIRES

FROM MOST EVERYONE ● £15-20

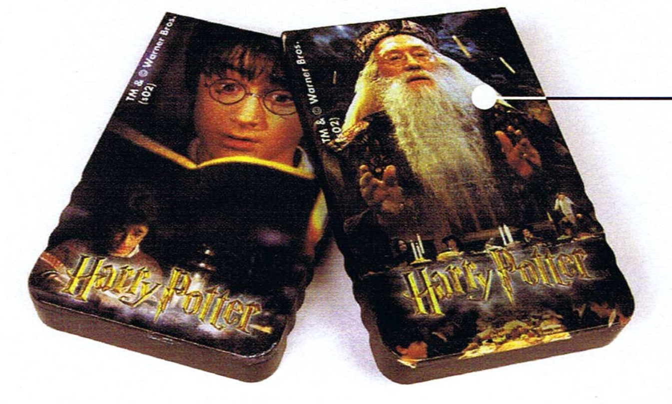
It's a case of 'once you've got one, you'll never look back'. Trouble is, if you want four of them, it'll set you back 120 quid. That's almost the price of a Gamecube!





POTTER MEMORY CARDS

FROM THRUSTMASTER ● £9.99 (x1), £14.99 (x2) ● TEL 020 8655 1881



Like the beard, Dumbledore! Even more amazingly – assuming Mr Harris wasn't cremated – it's still growing! Did you know that the length of beard an average man would grow if he never, ever shaved would be approximately 27.5 feet? That's a whole lot of beard! They don't even make penguins that big. It's roughly the same distance – give or take a few feet – that Jackie Chan fell when he was filming Armour of God. He's still got the hole in his head that the rock made, you know, and if he likes you, he'll even let you touch his brain – just as long as you wash your hands first.

As for the memory cards... well, they've got various Potter-themed images on them, and they even sometimes save your games, too. Will wonders never cease?

NOT AS GOOD AS...



MEMORY CARD 59

FROM NINTENDO ● £15

Third-party cards are cheaper, but they have an annoying tendency to wipe your saves.



GBA TV TUNER

FROM BLAZE ● £70 ● TEL 0905 121 1000

It's a nice idea. Sega's Game Gear had a similar device that worked rather well – especially with its backlit screen, and when you pull this puppy out of the box and fit it to your GBA it's all – considering what it does – rather sleek in design. Once you turn it on, you'll be amazed at the features on offer. There's channel after channel of snow, fuzz and – our particular favourite – complete blackness. We tried it outside to make sure those annoying thing called 'walls' weren't hampering reception, and even then there was no joy. Paul is currently scaling Ben Nevis to see if he can get a picture up there, but to be honest, we don't fancy his chances.

NOT AS GOOD AS...



A REAL TELEVISION

You know. Those things that have been in every living room for the last 50 years. Usually, the damn things actually *work*.





5.6" TFT MONITOR

JOYTECH ● £99

The sharpest, cheapest, biggest and best screen around so far. Absolutely no contest whatsoever (not that there's much).



PRO PAD

LOGIC3 ● £14.99

The best third-party pad – we'll be surprised if anyone beats it. It's sturdy, the analogue is almost perfect, and it's comfortable to hold.



XA 3021 GAMING THEATRE

ALTEC LANSING ● £79.99

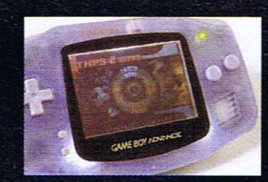
The design might not be to everyone's tastes, but there's no arguing with the sound quality. Currently the best thing under Paul's desk.



GTZ 500 RACING WHEEL

SAITEK ● £30

Not great, but still the best wheel available. It's robust, and it handles well, although the button placement leaves a lot to be desired at times.



AFTER-BURNER

TRITON LABS ● £35

Most GBA lights don't require sawing, gluing and soldering to install, but once fitted there's no better lighting alternative to this.

in association with Virgin megastores

SAVE THE DINOSAURS WITH A FURRY FOX

STARFOX ADVENTURES





WHAT'S IT ALL ABOUT?

Adventuring and fighting, that's what *Starfox Adventures* is based on. Sure, Rare have thrown in a few token Arwing blast sections, but the only real links to the original SNES title are the annoying characters you'll come across...





WHAT WE SAID IN ISSUE 74

"Can Fox locate the missing staff? Does an Arwing pilot have the combat skills to defeat an army of fox-eating lizards? Are the lesser members of the Starfox team still as hopeless as always? Time for an epic adventure... Maybe."




1

Rescue lizards in Rare's last-ever Nintendo game...

PROLOGUE THE KRAZOA SPIRIT

First up is the small matter of taking out that flying galleon **(1)**. Luckily, because it's the start of the game and all, you're invincible. So it's simply a matter of aiming your fireballs at the two towers and the twirling thing at the bottom. Then take a moment to marvel at the lovely rain effects before blasting the rest of the ship away.

Once you're on board the ship **(2)**, it's just a matter of running straight ahead to the other end of the deck and speaking to the caged Cloud Runner **(3)**. Next, pop below deck to pick up a key to Krazoa Palace **(4)**, then head back to have a natter with your chirpy friend.

After the cut-scene with the super-scary General Scales has finished, you'll find yourself outside the palace. Run past the jellyfish and then use the key on the door. Take the barrel from inside, and throw it at the line of four crates that are placed to the right of the palace.

Go back and grab another barrel, then run down the ramp. You'll find a crack in the wall behind the torch in the alcove – throw the barrel at it, then go through the gap.

Take a left and then a right, picking up the barrel behind the fallen dinosaur. Throw it at the barrels nearby. Carry on back down the main hallway until you reach a fuel barrel generator.

Pick one up and go through the gap you've just created by blowing up the crates, watching out for the fire bursts as you run merrily along. See that crack in the wall? Throw your barrel at it.

In the next room, pick up the fuel barrel and drop it on the pressure pad to your right. This will keep the door open. Go through, speak to the poor dying dino, then stand on the warp point.

Once you've warped, run forward and climb up the ladder in the next room. Go past the flames and through the pit to the fuel barrel. Kill the jellyfish with it then go through the door it opens. Put a barrel on the switch in the next room, but be quick as this time there's a timer on it.

Speak to the strange glowing thing in the next room. You'll have to guess correctly which urn it hides in to progress. Do this three times and you'll be whisked back to the palace. Speak to the dino again, then head over to the platform behind him. Go right at the junction, then release the spirit.


2

NGC INSIDER KNOWLEDGE!

SAVE 'EM

Don't forget to save regularly. There's nothing worse than having to do a tricky section over again...


3


4

CONTROL

It may be lifted wholesale from Zelda, but the intuitive control system makes picking up the game a doddle. Use A for all actions – and look out for the changing symbols in the top-right corner. So whether you need to throw or drop an explosive barrel, it's simply a context-sensitive button-press away.







5


6


7


8


9




SNEAK ATTACK?
You'll never be ambushed by an enemy from behind, so don't panic if you're surrounded by foes.

PART ONE
ENTER THE FOX

Travel to Thorntail Hollow **(5)**, run forward to grab your staff **(6)**, and then find the stone doorway **(7)**. Kill any Sharpclaws milling about, cross the river and go right to find the new cave hole. Drop down the hole under the stone and swim to the platform in the centre **(8)**. Fire Blast the panel next to the gate.

Go back and Fire Blast the stone doorway panel where you fought the Sharpclaws. Go through and see the Queen. Fire Blast the bomb-spore plant and use the spores at the wall crack near the waterfall **(9)**.

Talk to the Warp Stone, then exit through the hole and walk left. Inside the door with two torches is the store – go and buy some rock candy for the Warp Stone, then warp to Ice Mountain.

Grab the barrel up the ramp, blow up the crate barrier, beat up the Sharpclaws and then Fire Blast the panel.

You'll now enter a snow race, which you must win to rescue Tricky. Cut the large corners and you should be fine.

Grab some Blue Grub Tub fungii in the tunnel and feed 'em to Tricky. He's an annoying little mini-beast as he won't do his work for you if he's too hungry. Once he's full, do a Find Secret at the crack on the ground. Make Tricky stay on the pressure switch and hit the switch inside the gates behind you. Cross the lava and Find Secret on the crack in the wall.

Kill the five Sharpclaws before they feast on Tricky, Find Secret at the base of the fallen tree and grab the staff upgrade below.

Find Secret on the Alpine Root near the fallen trees, then feed the woolly mammoth two of them. He'll make a block fall from the sky. Push it down the ice path to his right then climb up.

Pay the Bribe Claw 25 scarabs to get past, follow the tunnel to the sewer, jump in, go left and forward to a pressure switch. Hit it, do the lever switch, then follow the tunnel to a gate. Open it with the lever switch and Tricky will go and see mommy.

Buy a firefly lantern at the shop, Find Secret at the crack in the structure to the right of the shop doorway, climb down the well and follow the tunnel until you're in a cavern. Use a bomb spore in the middle of the pool to drain the water. Press the switch and grab the new staff upgrade.

Backtrack to the ramp and Boost Pad up to the tunnel above the lower level. Use a bomb spore and push the block from the bridge onto the switch back in the room you just drained.

The first white grub you need is in the room with the ladder; another is to the right of the water pool (Rocket Boost over to get it). Use a bomb spore to lower a column at the other end of the room to get two more white grubs. Now go back and give them to the Queen at the temple.

NGC TELLS YOU HOW TO...







ARWING ACTION

It may be a poor distant cousin to the sublime blasting action of the original Starfox, but the Arwing sections in Fox's latest adventure make up a vital part of travelling around the universe. To fly successfully, you'll need to hit the required number of gold rings, as well as blast your way through asteroid fields. But remember, it's the rings that count most.





PART TWO SNOWHORN RESCUE

Go to the Snowhorn Wastes, use your gate key across from the Bribe Claw, then take the first left. Speak to the Snowhorn stuck down the hole in the ice, then hit the weird tree to get a frost weed. Rinse and repeat two more times to rescue the Snowhorn.

Fly to Dark Ice. Follow the twisty road, Find Secret at the blocked mineshaft and grab the Shackle Key from the chest **(10)**.

Save the Snowhorn and use the Bridge Cog in the gears behind the waterfall. Rescue the Snowhorn then Flame the shed back at the archway. Flame the fire inside, grab the alpine root and push the block over the drain. Exit, run down the hill over the bridge and Flame the ice wall to get an alpine root. Feed them to the Snowhorn and ride him over the bridge. Flame the ice wall, Rocket Boost up, then exit via the window and get in the cannon.

Aim at the wooden X – press A for a second and a half – and then at the five Sharpclaws to open the barrier. Retrieve the cogs from the item boxes at the Doomed Structure, beneath the cannon and behind the X. Use the new bridge, then Dig through the wall crack **(11)**. Fire Blast the target and Flame all the gratings to exit. Grab the object at the bridge of light then see the Snowhorn again.

Follow the alpine roots, then Tusk Attack **(12)** the boarded cave entrance. Use the racer, go over the conveyor belts and Rocket Blast at the end to Fire Blast a target, grab the Silver Key and hit the catwalk. Free Tricky.

Get the Gold Key behind the ice wall and free the Snow Horn. Fire Blast the three green icicles, hit the lever switch then Rocket Blast to the next level (use the moving block to reach the alcove). Shove the block off the cliff and climb down.

Go through the glowing room down the mine and take the Fuel Barrel onto the pad up the ladder. Hit the lever switch then use it on the wall crack on the last bridge. Hit the switch inside, dodge the boulders, hit the next switch and turn left at the flaming column. Aim at the columns in the cannon then use the platforms to exit.

Flame the boss, Stay Tricky to distance him, attack the boss' tail until he eats you, then hit the snot inside him. Fire Blast when he tries to suck you back in and Fire Blast inside when he eats you to get a Spellstone.

Light the three beacons with the Fire Weed Seeds at the river, take the Moon Pass Key and go through the crack near the temple wall. Run to the canyon and use the key.

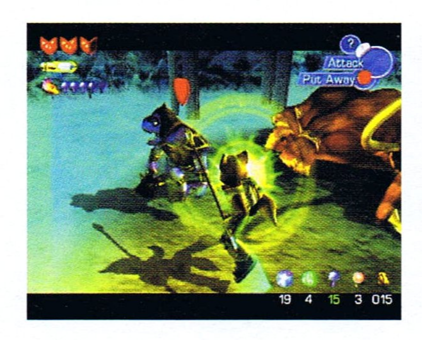
Rocket Boost to the ledge past the moving pilfering, hit the lever switch and exit through the gate. Use the Spellstone on the Seal at Volcano Force Point. Fire Blast the blue orb on the left when the torches are blue, and the green orb when green.

Flame the grates to extend the ledges and get the Ice Blast Staff upgrade. Ice Blast the red flames then hit the Spellstone Seal. Ice Blast the flames, then Flame the grating to warp away.

NGC INSIDER KNOWLEDGE!

MAP MONEY

You can buy maps in the local store, but you're better off saving your scarabs as most areas are easy to navigate.





13

14



HE'S TRICKY!

He may be annoying at times, but the triceratops is also invaluable to completing the game. Often, just checking out his question marks will reveal a secret or give you a hint as to how to pass an obstacle.



15







NGC INSIDER KNOWLEDGE!

SCARAB

If an arrow appears next to a rock it means that you can lift it up. Do so and you'll find some scarabs to catch.

PART THREE COMBAT TEST

Enter the new cave at Moon Mountain Pass, lift the rock, fall down the hole underneath it and get the Ground Quake staff upgrade. Stun the monster outside and hit the purple spot on its back when it spins. Grab the Moonseed it spews out, use it on the planting patch, and climb up the vine.

Repeat on the next section until you reach a room with a bomb spore. Fire Blast it and go into the open area.

Get the Trickster to Find Secret near the Kalda Chom to get a small meteor. Put it on the vents in front of the large one. Find Secret again on the dirt patch behind and in the middle of the path (it's the one on fire). Once all three are on the vents, the large meteor blocking your way should lift up. Go past.

Kill the Kalda Chom for a Moonseed, then climb the vines until you get to the warp point at the top of a ramp. Go to Krazoa Shrine and cross the water. Ice Blast the flame with your staff and climb the wall, then Fire Blast the switch behind you and swim over the pool. Fire Blast the target on the ceiling behind the fire column and go see the Krazoa Spirit.

You'll now have to complete the Test of Combat. Kill ten Sharpclaws to complete the test **(13, 14)** and then warp merrily along to Moon Mountain Pass **(15)**.

Grab the fuel barrel ahead and jump into the air current at the cliff's edge. Throw the barrel at the wall on the other side, then ride the air current up to the new cave. Go to the Warp Stone and then Krazoa Palace.

Fire Blast the jellyfish, run forward, beat the Sharpclaws and get a barrel from the next room. Go up the ramp – follow the dim shapes to know where to turn – and throw the barrel at the crack near the crate. Fire Blast the target over the door, get a fuel barrel and throw it at the wall crack.

Fire Blast the green orb when the flames go green, and the blue orb when they're blue, then shoot the flame shooter. Go back, get a barrel, and drop it on the switch here.

Go up the elevator, turn right at the top of the tunnel then Fire Blast the jellyfish in the large room. Use the air currents to meet Krystal on the roof.

Jump off the platform and go to the glowing circle. You can now release the Krazoa Spirit when you're on it. Once that's done, go and see the 'hilarious' Warp Stone.

16





NGC INSIDER KNOWLEDGE!

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Unfortunately, and as much as we've tried, you can't harm either Tricky or the friendly dinosaurs. Boo.

PART FOUR LIGHTFOOT VILLAGE

Enter the tunnel at Cape Claw to get to Lightfoot Village. Kill the sharpclaws, give 60 scarabs to the Golden Scarab statue, then exit and go left, left, right, left and left through the maze.

Fire Blast the switch behind the waterfall, then hit the beach via the docks. Pay the Bribe Claw, then give the High Top four gold bars (the first is between trees at the Bribe Claw, the second on the left under a crate, the third on the other beach and the fourth through the archway).

Cross the bridge, hit the lever switch up the ladder, go through the gate then push the blocks over the grates. Go back to the beach, speak to the Cloud Runner gatekeeper, and then take the Arwing to Thorntail Hollow.

Go down the ladder, go clockwise round the pillars, press the switch then run back through the light circles, hit the new switch with a Fire Blast, and exit via the gate. Go up the spiral walkway, hit the lever, then go back and get captured.

Push the loose stone to escape, go to the room of cages, grab a fuel barrel from up the ladder and use the wind tunnel to blow a hole in the roof. Wear the disguise you're given in the Cage Room to get your staff back, hit the switches and get the Power Room key.

At the Cloud Runner courtyard smash the crate with the Sharpclaw on it and hit the lever. Ice Blast the fire in the alcove in the courtyard, go left and use the Power Room key. Hit the three switches in the centre for three light gems.

Float up on the air current and wear your disguise in the room on the right, standing on the glowing footprints. Drop a fuel barrel on the pad near the centre gate, then throw it outside over to the lamps to open the barricade.

Step on the pad to operate a ladder, and flip the switches near the Queen. Throw a fuel barrel into the air current and one at the column in the middle of the courtyard.

Rescue the Cloud Runners and the Queen, turn right out the courtyard and down the ladder at the archway. In the Treasure Room collect some fireflies, take the wind current out and throw a barrel into the wind. Hit the Treasure Room lever to get it back. Throw it at the crack in the wall.

Outlast General Scales in the race and fly to Dinosaur Planet **(16)**.

Follow the glowing footprints at Cape Claw, Stay Tricky on the red switch, hit the lever switch on the ledge and swim to where the waterfall was. Ice Blast the fire at the statue, get the Fire Gem and put it in a statue. Rescue the Lightfoot on the beach for the other fire gem.

Hit the switch, Stay Tricky on it, hit it again. Flame the door, Fire Blast the switch across the pool, flame the briars, push the block, lower the water with the switch and push the block onto the switch.

Ice Blast the Sharpclaw with the shield on the beach, shatter him and insert your Spellstone in the pad. Get Tricky to Stay on the panel up the ramp and step on the light sections of the grid to cross. Swim left and hit the switches through the narrow walkway.

Swim back, go left, climb the wall and Fire Blast the green flame to warp. Boost Pad through the sliding doors, swim left and hit the switch in the south-west corner. Stand on the pad in disguise, drag the block over the hole, hit the switch and swim out.

Flame the grate in the next room, Fire Blast the targets and the block into the slot with the red and green lights. Go west, south, east, north, west and south, exit north and Fire Blast through the shifting flames to hit the orb. Warp to Thorntail Hollow.

WHY Y?

Remember, you can allocate specific commands to the X- and Y-buttons on the joypad. One dead cert is to Fire Blast with Y – it makes certain sections of the game infinitely easier.

STARFOX ADVENTURES

Save giant lizards from oblivion









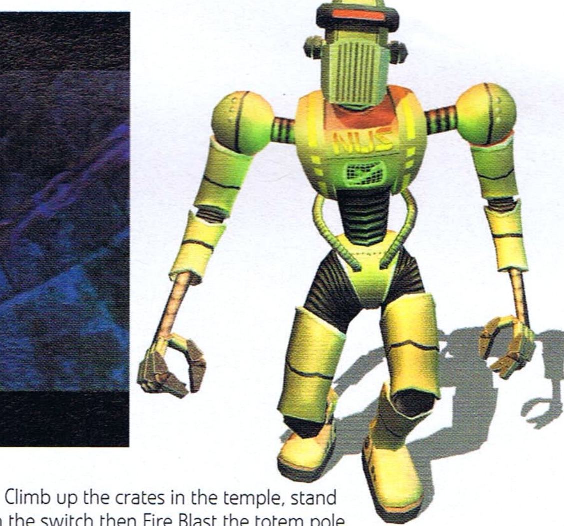






17





PART FIVE THE THIRD KRAZOA SPIRIT

Use the Flame command to fry the Lightfoots who are attacking you. Go into the water and swim north-east.

Flame the briar patch and dig inside to get the wooden block. Swim south-west and dig behind the totem hill for the circular block. Head east for the final block. Go to the Block Room and put the blocks in place.

Jump down to the three small circular islands on the north-west side and use them to hit the large island. Lift the strange-looking block and Boost Pad to get to the top of the island. Cross the bridge behind the totem pole, go down the ladder and cross the next bridge. Go see the Big Chief.

Go back across the first bridge for the first totem poll on the island.

The second one is on the ledge behind where the first block was. Boost Pad to reach it, then drop down. Use the stepping stones to reach the third block, then jump back in the water and swim south-east.

The last totem pole is on top of a pillar of stone, so scale the wall to reach it. After hitting the switch you'll be taken back to the Chief. Elect to take the Test of Strength.

The easiest way to beat Muscle Foot is to let him push you until he's at the same angle as you, then push back as hard as you can. Back at the village, talk to the mother inside the hut across the bridge and help her find her babies. Once done, she'll reveal a boost pad which will let you access the Token Well in the centre of the forest.

Climb up the crates in the temple, stand on the switch then Fire Blast the totem pole until it turns white. Go through the gate, Boost Pad and hit the switch.

Hit the switch that lowers the water, then hit the switch in the pit in the next room. Go up the hill for a Krazoa Spirit **(17)**. Keep the indicator green by facing the Sharpclaw, then take the Spirit to Thorntail Hollow.

Warp to the palace, kill the Sharpclaws, ride the lift and the wind current and stand on the footprints while in disguise.









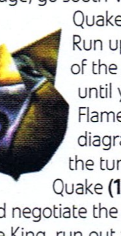


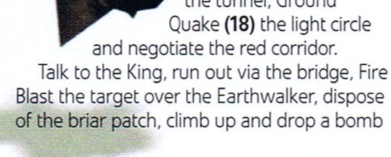


SLIP SLIDING AWAY

Frustrated at the lazy way Fox descends down ladders? Use A to see the vulpine vermin slide down speedily.

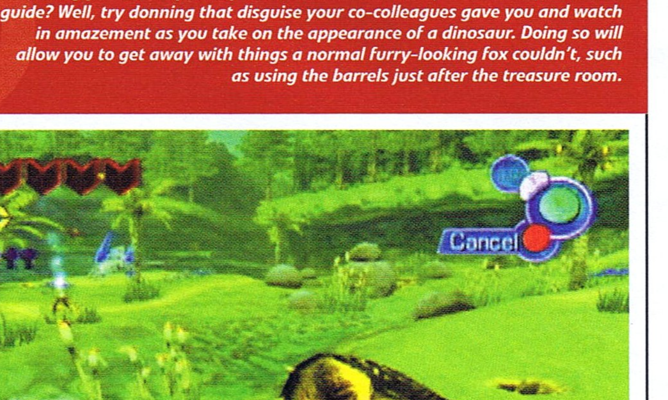






DISGUISE

Finding yourself hopelessly stuck, even with the help of our comprehensive guide? Well, try donning that disguise your co-colleagues gave you and watch in amazement as you take on the appearance of a dinosaur. Doing so will allow you to get away with things a normal furry-looking fox couldn't, such as using the barrels just after the treasure room.







PART SIX THE THIRD SPELLSTONE

Go into the cave behind the Earthwalker at the Warp Stone, then attack and Ground Quake the thieves to keep the eggs safe. Get the Staff Upgrade, visit the Queen, go up the ramp behind her and use your Portal Device on the Walled City. Take the Arwing there.

Fire Blast the tree next to the Earthwalker, cross the bridge, go south-west and Ground Quake the blue circle. Run up the ramp north of the temple, go right until you reach the top. Flame the moon in the diagram in the south of the tunnel, Ground Quake **(18)** the light circle and negotiate the red corridor.

Talk to the King, run out via the bridge, Fire Blast the target over the Earthwalker, dispose of the briar patch, climb up and drop a bomb spore in the centre. Fall down for the Super Ground Quake.

Go west, take a right and Fire Blast the target in the tree. Go north-west and do the same, swim through the circle until you get the Silver Redeye Tooth, and put it in the blue statue in the temple.

Super Ground Quake the four redeyes guarding the temple, then Fire Blast them. Enter the red building for the Gold Redeye Tooth. Put it in the red statue.

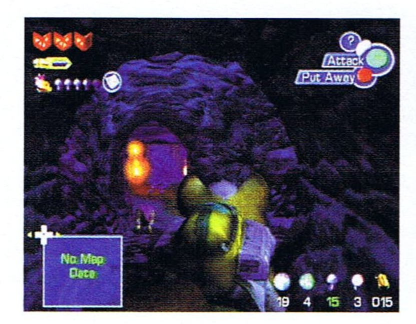
When fighting the King, Fire Blast a target, grab a fuel barrel, wait near a panel and stand on a switch when he's finishing roaring and throw your barrel. Grab the Spellstone and go to the surface.

At Volcano Point Temple use the Spellstone in the panel in the circle room. Get on the moving platform, up the wall and up the elevator, Ice Blast the fire in the next room, go down the tunnel and stand on the panel. Stay Tricky on the red switch, Ice Blast the fire, hit the lever and go through the gate.

Ice Blast the fire orb, Stay Tricky on the red switch and exit. Use the Warp Pad and put your Spellstone in its slot.

Fire Blast all the bats at Thorntail Hollow, collect 130 scarabs and go up the slope. Speak to the Snowhorn over the ice chunks, give him the Snowhorn Artifact, and blow the horn on all seven pads (behind the river gate; near the cave; the fallen tree; the bottom of the cliff; past the Bribe Claw; near the gatekeeper; and over the river).

Go into the Snowhorn's cave, warp to the Krazoa Shrine and then throw a fuel barrel at the cracked wall. Put another one on the barrel pad, hit the lever to manipulate the flame and toss the barrel into the wind tunnel. Use it to blast through into the spirit's room. Hit the A-button as fast as you can to complete the Test of Strength, then go back to Krazoa Palace via the Warp Stone **(19)** and release the spirit.







20



NGC INSIDER KNOWLEDGE!

FANCY MOVES

Unfortunately, there's no real tactic involved in taking out the day-to-day minions other than bashing away at the A-button.

PART SEVEN THE FINAL SPELLSTONE

Speak to the Thorntail near the well, go through the portal and Arwing to Dragon Rock. Go to the north building, climb the ladders and go along the ledge. Grab the fuel barrel at the end, put it down on the pad, hit the switch to use the magnet, climb the ladder and stand on the red panel. Drop down the ladder and use the barrel to blow up the planks over the doorway.

Hit the lever in the alcove up the ramp, go outside, and ride the Earthwalker. Charge the four walls with the green light then Fire Blast the guns. Go through the open door and Boost Pad to the High Top. Fire Blast the targets on the ropes and protect the freed High Top by shooting down the missiles.

Go through the open gate and head south. Stay Tricky on the panel as you Fire Blast the three targets over the flame jets. Grab the fuel barrel, chuck it into the wind stream, follow it and repeat over the next two streams. Throw the barrel into the wood barricade.

Go down the well near the once-boarded-up doorway, hit the lever switch then hit the cage when it's over the hole. Flame the grate, hop onto the Cloud Runner's back and shoot the red orbs on top of the spires.

Hit Drakor with Fire Blasts – that's all you need to do – then take the Spellstone back to Dinosaur Planet via Arwing **(20)**.

At Cape Claw swim over to the cave on the west shore and Portal Device the door. Ice Blast the flames and man the cannon. Take out the barricade near the statute, hit the rock wall at the docks and the rock spire next to the wooden platform.

Swim over to where the rock spire was and get the Staff Upgrade. Go to the Krazoa statue's mouth, through the hallways and hit the upper ledge of the temple. Use your Spellstone, go over the floor puzzle (as before), and into the pool on the right. Portal Device the door then exit through the south-westerly tunnel.

Climb up, warp up a level, then hop into the water to the north. Swim west, climb out and push the stone block in the tunnel to the north wall near the platform. Climb up, hit the switch and jump to the Magic Plant (found on the ledge). Smash open the crate at the end and stand in the footprints with your disguise on. Use the lever switch to raise the water and exit.

To pass the torches, use statues with a similarly coloured panel to put them out with your Fire Blaster. Slide the block east, south, east, north, west, south and east. Boost Pad in the Warp Room.

Go right, Fire Blast the orb via the flame, cross the bridge and use the final Spellstone. Return to Thorntail Hollow.



TEST OF KNOWLEDGE

Put the Cloud Runner Flute in front of the temple, the wooden block in the hole near the Lightfoot Hut, the Dino Horn in front of the stone columns, the Asteroid in space, the Gold Tooth in the Walled City Temple, and the Moonseed in front of the crater.



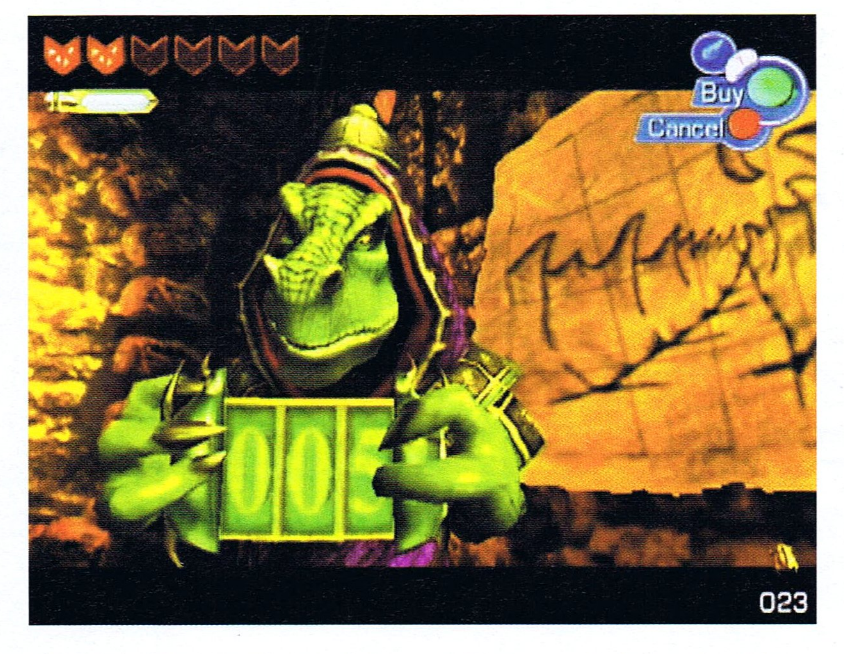












PART EIGHT THE FIFTH KRAZOA SPIRIT

Buy the Hi-Def Device from the shop, take the Arwing to the Earthwalker's home, see the King on the other side of the bridge **(21)** then head east to the grid of four blocks.

Shove the first one south to the sun tile, then push the one to the east west, then north to a sun tile. Push the third one north to the sun tile. The final one goes east.

Get out the pit, run along the path, up the elevator on the side of the temple and stand on the panel. Peep through the hole, zoom in and the temple will open.

The correct order is for the blocks is: push both sun blocks left; pull the moon block into the moon hole; then place the sun blocks in the sun holes.

In the maze, Ground Quake the blue light circle so you can hit the lever switch. In the hallway Ice Blast the flames, hit the switch, Fire Blast the target over the pit then go left down the corridor. Burn the spiky foliage, hit the lever switch then through the open door.

Portal Device the door, Fire Blast the three targets in order: left; up; down. Exit via the vapour walkway and grab the Sun Stone.

Go back out the temple to the west side of the land and the sliding blocks. Push the one on the west towards the south. The one north-east goes west, the third block goes home south, and the final one goes west, north and east.

Out of the pit go up the lift and look through the hole into the moon. Enter the temple, flip the first lever switch, run through the gate, then stay to the side until the second gate opens. Repeat a third time.

Ground Quake in the next room to open the door, then go through the invisible maze (just press up when you're blocked to find the right way). Portal Device into the next room, do the spinning wheel puzzle as before and take the Moon Stone.

Go back to the main temple and see the captured King. Put the Moon Stone in the blue statue and the Sun Stone in the orange one to open the Krazoa Shrine entrance. Exit and warp away. Hit the switch inside the Walled City Shrine and ride the wind over. Ice Blast the fire, go over the wind current then Fire Blast the target on the rafters.

Step on the switch to raise the gate, then hop onto the column and go forward to the Krazoa Spirit. Doing this completes the Test of Knowledge.

Exit the Arwing, go north on the wind current and release your Spirit. Go back to the roof, jump on the warp pad, step into the circle then defeat the foes. Release the Spirit at the statue just east.

To defeat Andross, aim for the diamond between his head and eyes. Target the arms next, and pull away from him, barrel-rolling to avoid being sucked inside him.

For stage two, throw bombs from the supply crate down his throat, then blast his brain away. Do that and you're a hero.



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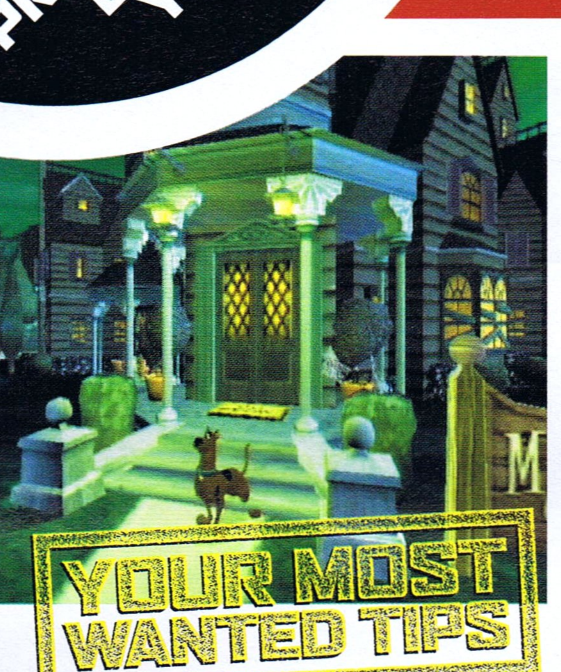


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TIPS EXTRA



SCOOBY DOO: NIGHT OF 100 FRIGHTS!

HOLIDAY

By some spooky manipulation of the Gamecube's internal clock, you can make some snazzy special items appear in the front yard and down at the Mystic Playground…

1st January Fireworks
14th February Hearts on Scooby Snacks
17th March Green fountain water and smoke from chimneys
4th July Red, white, and blue fireworks, fountain water, and smoke from chimneys
31st October Giant bats over courtyard door for decoration
25th December Snow
31st December Pretty fireworks

CRASH BANDICOOT

SNEAKY LIVES

Fancy a sneaky way of never, ever dying in the Gamecube version of the game that features perhaps the most useless mascot ever? Simply pause the game before the screen fades to black when you're about to die, and select Warp Room. You'll now find yourself back at said room with all your lives still intact.

FIFA 2003

STADIA

Fancy a couple of nifty new stadiums to kick the ol' pigskin around in? Well, to open the Seoul stadium you'll have to win the International Cup, while taking home the Club Championship title will let you strut your stuff in the Stade de France.

MARIO PARTY 4

DYNAMIC DUO

Mario Party 4 is full to bursting with unlockable secrets, so to start with here's some extras for the dynamic dream team duo of Mario and his brother.

MARIO

For a veritable plumber's chest of secrets, first beat Toad in Story mode to unlock Mario's sofa. Beating Goomba, Shy Guy, Boo, Koopa and Bowser will give you a TV, a table, a fridge, a doll and a Bowser vase.

LUIGI

Beating Toad, Goomba, Shy Guy, Boo, Koopa and Bowser will see you rewarded with high-class merchandise such as a non-Ikea sofa, a TV, a table, a fridge, a doll and a case.

TAUNT

A sly press of the L-button will see your cute character taunt an opponent. Beautiful.

BOWSER BOARD

Finishing the game on any difficulty level and with any character will open up the Bowser-themed board for you to play on.

EXPERT DIFFICULTY

Completing the game on Easy, Medium and Hard difficulty levels will open up the über-hard Expert setting.

MINIGAME ROOM SECRETS

Toad Plate Clear a 40-piece puzzle in under three minutes in Jigsaw Jitters.
Goomba Plate Clear 15 pages in the Bookworm minigame.
Shy Guy Plate Finish Dungeon Duos within one minute and 30 seconds.
Boo Plate Dive for at least seven seconds in Take a Breather.
Toad's Teapot Clear a 30-piece puzzle in Jigsaw Jitter in under two minutes.
Boo's Photo Stand Clear Mario Speedwagons in ten seconds or less.

NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

In Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4, always use a revert when landing ramp tricks. This not only helps prevent you from bailing when you land, but lets you keep your combos going!
Michael Portnoy, London









YOUR TOP TIPS Share the knowledge and bag yourself a prize…

Found an interesting cheat, tip, secret or quirky thing in one of your games? Then send it into us immediately! Each month we'll stick the best into our Readers' Tips section. In return, if your tip is the number one readers' tip, we'll send you a Gamecube game of your choice. Sound good? Then don't hesitate – DO IT!

HERE'S MY TOP TIP...

IT'S FOR

AND THIS IS HOW IT WORKS



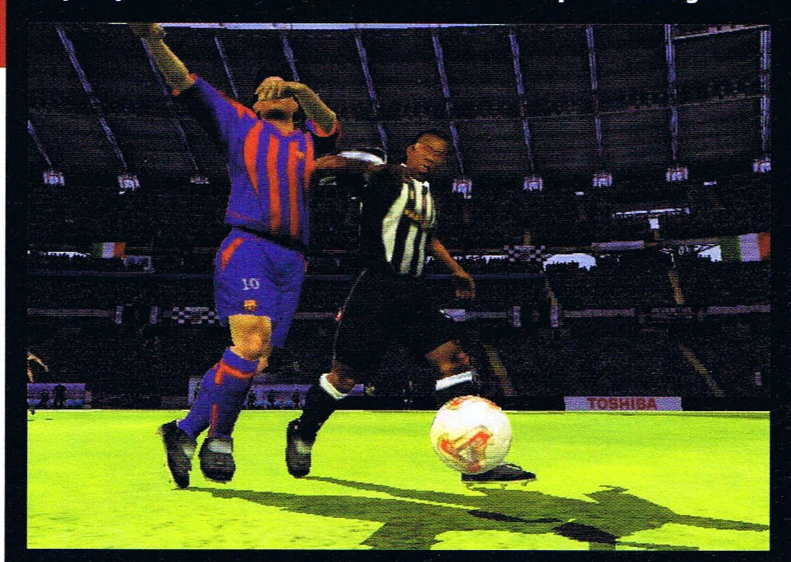
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READERS' TOP TEN TIPS

You know how this one goes. You send in your best tips – and not just any old junk you found on that darn inner'net – and the top one wins a game.



1. FIFA 2003

Transfer merry-go-round

You don't have to have Mr Fayed peering over your shoulder to be able to buy up the best in the business. Rather, go to the Team Management option on the menu screen, pick the team you'd like, then press X three times. You can now buy whoever you want.
Stewart O'Connor, Glasgow

2. ROGUE LEADER

Top per cent

Once you've unlocked the Tie Advanced, you'll always receive a 100 per cent targeting rating – regardless of the Targeting Computer's efficiency.
William Richards, Tunbridge Wells

3. SUPER SMASH BROS

Thievery

If you get eliminated in a team battle (stock match), but your partner still has at least two lives left, then pressing start on your controller will nick one of theirs. Cheeky, huh?
Ian Martin, Southampton

4. PIKMIN

Pearly whites

Lovely game this, isn't it? Well anyway, see those pearls inside the clams? Well carry one back to an onion and you'll be rewarded with 50 pikmin. Fifty! It's sheer madness, I tell you.
Jonny Dodds, County Ireland

5. SUPER MARIO SUNSHINE

All for the cash

Squirting open windows, hanging signs and those pesky Wanted posters of Mario is an easy way to grab a load of extra coins.
Ian Ellis, Wrexham

6. FIFA 2002

Cheap shots

As soon as you kick off, run into your opponent's half holding down shoot, then when it shoots automatically the ball should hit the back of the net.
Mike Freeman, Merseyside

7. SUPER MONKEY BALL

Bananamania!

If you're on one of the extra levels – on any difficulty setting – and have more than one life left then an easy way to increase your score is to collect up all the bananas and throw yourself off the edge. You won't lose points this way (but will do if you use a continue).
Steve Beaufort, Wiltshire

8. PASTA

Cook-meister

When cooking dried pasta, add a dash of olive oil to the water to prevent your fusilli, penne, conchigle or linguini from sticking to the pan.
V Drazen, Los Angeles

9. TONY HAWK'S PRO SKATER 3

Ahoy there!

Grind the pirate flag on Skater Island to open up a skateable pirate ship!
Tom Johnson, Teeside

10. GAMECUBE!

Schizo

Hold down the Z-button when you turn your Cube on, and you'll hear a different noise to the usual one.
James Brunars, Leeds



Remember – the doctor will only see you if you have an appointment.



Dr Kitts,
I've got a bit of a problem. You see, as well as finding Slippy just oh-so-adorable, I've also heard that there are some in-game cheats in *Starfox Adventures.* No matter how hard I look, though, I just can't find them. Help me, please!
Lucy Smith, via email

Dr Kitts invites Bishop Don 'Magic' Juan round for tea and biscuits…
Well, I can help you with the cheat mode, but your infatuation for that vivisection fodder is beyond repair, I'm afraid. Anyway, feed one of the wells scattered around the planet's 20 Scarabs and you'll be given a cheat token you can use at the Warp Stone Garden. You can then use it in your inventory.

Dr Kitts,
I absolutely adore *Super Monkey Ball.* In fact, I almost like it more than life itself. However, I've heard people muttering about some extra levels. Do these exist?
Ryan Poole, Cardiff

Dr Kitts does some elementary research into becoming a butler…
I must admit to a penchant for monkeying around on this simian ballfest myself, what with it tapping into my love of monkeys. And their brains. But as for your question, the answer is a resoundingly positive one. All you need to do is complete either the set of Easy, Advanced or Expert levels without using any continues. Not even one solitary one. You'll then be treated to some wonderful-looking new levels. Next!

Dr Kitts,
Now I like a nice pound of flesh and some fresh blood and gore in my games, but I seem to have become horribly stuck on *Resident Evil.* My problem is the Black Widow spider boss. How do I dispose of it?
Jeff Johnson, Hanwell

Dr Kitts endorses the nutritional benefits of spam on a radio advert…
The Black Widow boss is surprisingly easy to overcome… if you have collected the shotgun and know how to use that tasty firearm. What you need to do is put a brave face on the situation and literally stand there pumping lead into the spider. Don't worry if he gets a few hits in, as you'll be able to withstand the pain. Just watch out for those little critter spiders he spews out at you. Again, a couple of shotgun blasts should see them right.

Dr Kitts,
Sometimes in *Mario Party 4* coins start to appear when I roll the dice. Is there any method behind this madness?
Tony Cunningham, Chester



Dr Kitts ponders whether he'll donate his body to medical science when he finally bites the bullet…
There is indeed a method to this quirky situation, young man. If you'd have been paying attention you would have noticed that this strange but welcome phenomena only occurs when you are in mega or mini form. With two dice to roll, you'll be granted ten coins if both show the same number. Rolling two 7s will get you a bounty of 30 coins. Oh, and if you manage to roll the same number on all three dice when you're in super-mini or mega mode then you'll experience a golden shower of coinage.



Think of a number, any number. Or just use one of these codes…

GODZILLA

Wanna wreck cities in style? First, press and hold down L, B and R, then release B, R and L. Now enter these mammoth codes on the cheat screen:

- **567980** Play in black and white mode
- **174204** Players become mini micro monsters
- **505634** Players are now damage-proof
- **817683** Players will now deal out quad damage
- **492877** Health regenerates
- **756287** All buildings and objects become throwable
- **112122** All buildings become indestructible
- **316022** All monsters will be invisible
- **649640** Player 1 will always be in rage
- **122224** Player 2 will always be in rage
- **548053** Player 3 will always be in rage
- **451242** Player 4 will always be in rage
- **562142** No health power-ups
- **134615** No Mothra power-ups
- **413403** No energy power-ups
- **119702** No rage power-ups

STAR WARS: THE CLONE WARS

Fancy seeing a whole host of extras in the latest Star Wars franchise? Well, try these codes on the options screen then, young Padawan…

- **U, U, D, D, L, R, L, R, B, A, Start** Hear the Ewok celebration music
- **YUB YUB** Three bonus objects for the last mission you played
- **CHOSEN1** Unlimited ammo
- **FUZZBALL** Play as a wookiee
- **ROGERROGER** Play as a battle droid
- **FRAGFIESTA** Unlock all multiplayer maps
- **CINEMA** Unlock all cut-scenes
- **SAYCHEESE** If you would like to look at some very ugly photos of the team who created the game.

NGC READER KNOWLEDGE!

Press X before you hit the floor after a fall in Starfox Adventures – you won't take any damage!
Lisa Ditri, Birmingham

Use a memory card with another EA game on it in Tiger Woods for extra cash!
Tim Halls, Hull

MEDAL OF HONOR: FRONTLINE

Can't be bothered to – shock horror – actually play the game properly to access all the missions? Try these cheats code in the enigma machine then, you low-down dirty dog…

- **EAGLE** Mission 2 (A Storm in the Port)
- **HAWK** Mission 3 (Needle in a Haystack)
- **PARROT** Mission 4 (Several Bridges Too Far)
- **DOVE** Mission 5 (Rolling Thunder)
- **SEAGULL** Complete current mission with Gold Star

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2003

Make like Caddyshack and cheat your way to golfing scorecard perfection every time with these codes for everybody's favourite golf sim starring the great Tiger Woods, the Cablinasian with a penchant for the majors:

- **ALLTW3** All golfers
- **14COURSES** All courses
- **SUNDAY** Super Tiger Woods
- **XON** Brad Faxon
- **IAM#1** Cedric 'Ace' Andrews
- **BANDPANTS** Charles Howell III
- **GODFATHER** Dominic 'The Don' Donatello
- **MCRUFF** Hamish
- **THESWING** Jim 'Fists Of' Furyk
- **SUPERSTAR** Josey 'Wells' Scott
- **JUSTINTIME** Justin 'Not Timberlake' Leonard
- **COWGIRL** Kellie 'Rodeo' Newman
- **TB** Mark O'Meara
- **YOYOYO** Melvin 'Yosh' Tanigawa
- **NOTABLY** Notah BeGay III
- **SOLITARY1** Solita 'J-Lo' Lopez
- **SS** Steve Stricker
- **SINK** Stewart 'Martha' Cink
- **ORANGES** Stuart Appleby
- **2TON** Takeharu 'Tsunami' Moto
- **VALENTINE** Val 'Sunshine' Summer
- **VJSING** Vijay Singh







in association with



NOW SPONSORED BY PAUL'S PIGS! GET YOUR SCORES IN TO THE STILL-THE-SAME-LOOK I'M THE BEST. OINK!

I'M THE BEST



Urgh. We've had so many parties this month that the office looks like it's played host to a week-long game of beer wrestling between William Shatner and Oliver Reed. It doesn't smell very nice either, what with all the empty, clanking bottles of Drambuie and the dead magpie on the windowsill that's just out of reach.To top it off, The Eyebrow then floats over to our filthy corner and tells us we not only have to make another issue, but also look after the poodle while he goes for his manicure. Bah! Anyway. Such ceaseless festive debauchery might explain the fact that the new leagues haven't appeared yet. Er, sorry – but we've got a stinking great stack of entries now, some of which will be used to form some 'sexy' new tables. The rest will be ground into matter and used to feed Paul's Pigs, so that they become fat, docile and easy to kill. Now, where did we put those liqueur chocolates…

1





STAR PERFORMANCE

The only good monkey is one that you can train to climb through your neighbour's window, steal all their videos, put on their wife's wedding dress and then drink all their beer before throwing up everywhere and passing out on the dining room table. Although then again, that depends on who you ask – if you ask Kittsy, the only good monkey is a dead monkey. That's been made dead by fire.

Which reminds us of a great monkey joke: Why did the monkey fall out of the tree? Why? If you think you know the punchline, send it in Sellotaped to the most amusing picture of a monkey you can find to Dead Monkey Puzzle, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth St, Bath BA1 2BW. First correct punchline we fish out of the hollowed-out skull of a chimpanzee wins some kind of prize.

Anyway, before we get those pesky monkey rights association people ringing us up to complain again, we might as well get to the more pressing, simian-related point this meandering train of thought has brought us to. Which happens to be **Alexander Kerr** of **Lanark**'s mightily impressive time on the Frozen Highway in *Super Monkey Ball* of 1'10"70. Now, maybe it's because we're all just rubbish at games, but that strikes us as a time worthy enough of a free gamepad. Which it is. Bye!

2

HOW TO PROVE YOUR ACHIEVEMENT

When sending us evidence of your gaming achievements, it's useful to follow these steps…

PHOTOGRAPHS

If you're sending us evidence of the photographic variety:

1. Turn off the camera's flash (or cover it up) to prevent it from reflecting off the screen.
2. Draw the curtains to eradicate sunlight.
3. Use a fast film (200 or 400 ASA).
4. If you're using a digicam then use a slower shutter speed.
5. Point at the screen and click away.

PLEASE NOTE: In the past we've had experience of certain scamps 'fiddling' with their photographic evidence, so this time round we're being extra-specially (is that right?) careful. We would, in fact, welcome video evidence over photographic evidence. If, however, you can only send photos, be warned: any doubts over the legality of your entry will lead to instant disqualification, and jeering.

VIDEO

If you're going to be sending us the evidence that comes on a tape, follow these instructions carefully:

1. Plug the TV lead from the Gamecube into the Signal In socket of your video.
2. Connect the Signal Out socket on your video to your TV.
3. Find a spare channel on the video and search for the signal.
4. After completing and recording the challenge, rewind the tape and send it in.

NGC YOUR BEST PERFORMANCE

3

HERE'S MY BEST PERFORMANCE…

MARIO SUNSHINE
Best time on Il Piantissimo's Sand Sprint ....
Best time on Il Piantissimo's Crazy Climb ....

TIMESPLITTERS 2
Highest score in Behead the Undead ....
Best time in Pane in the Neck ....
Best time in Escape from Neo Tokyo ....

LUIGI'S MANSION
Total number of Gs ....
Time taken to beat final boss ....

ROGUE LEADER
Battle of Endor kills ....
Death Star Attack accuracy ....
Star Destroyer fastest time ....

WAVE RACE
Aspen Lake best race time ....
Lost Temple Lagoon stunt score ....
Southern Island lap time ....

SUPER SMASH BROS
Highest score in Home Run ....
Highest juggle combo ....
Quickest time in 100-man melee ....

SONIC 2
Juggernaut Level number of rings ....
Escape from the Military Base best time ....

TONY HAWK'S 3
The Foundry highest score ....
Canada highest trick combo. ....
Rio highest score ....

CRAZY TAXI
Ten-Minute Mode most money.. ....
Crazy Jump longest jump ....
Crazy Drift combo ....

SUPER MONKEY BALL
Fastest time on Frozen Highway ....
Highest score on Monkey Target ....
Fastest time on Advanced Floor 2 ....

Name ....

Address ....

....

....

....

Postcode ....

Send to:
I'M THE BEST, **NGC** Magazine,
30 Monmouth Street,
Bath, BA1 2BW

If you don't want to cut up your magazine, send a photocopy instead, and continue on another bit of paper if you run out of room. Or just write with something other than finger-paints.

LUIGI'S MANSION





See how many Gs you can notch up at the end of the game.

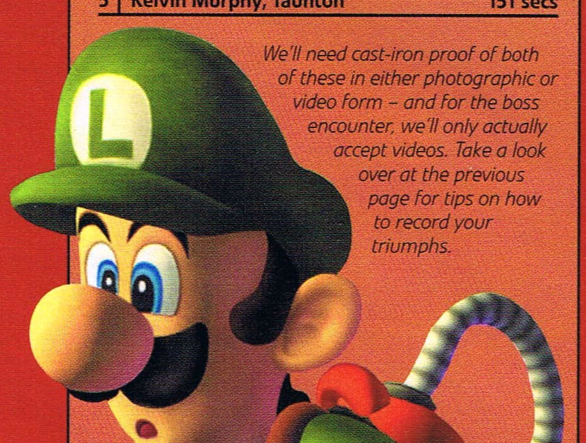
1	John Dawson, Hull	186,375,000G
2	Sean Hinton, Kidderminster	185,710,000G
3	Daniel Mitchell, East Sussex	184,440,000G
4	Jamie Butters, East Sussex	184,060,000G
5	Mark Richardson, Leeds	183,575,000G



See how long it takes you to dispose of the final boss.

1	Tim Wingate, Tyne & Wear	122 secs
2	Grover Mitchell, Newport	139 secs
3	Alex Gough, Rochdale	142 secs
4	Jonathan Bisaby, Leicester	144 secs
5	Kelvin Murphy, Taunton	151 secs

We'll need cast-iron proof of both of these in either photographic or video form – and for the boss encounter, we'll only actually accept videos. Take a look over at the previous page for tips on how to record your triumphs.



STAR WARS: ROGUE LEADER



Most kills on Battle of Endor (you must win at least a Bronze medal).

1	Kevin Ibbotson, Dublin	241
2	Dave Everey, Cheshire	221
3	Adam Goodwin, Anglesey	204
4	Joe Newman, London	191
5	David Gamble, Antrim	175



Highest accuracy on Death Star Attack (video evidence only, please).

1	Kieran Cornwell, London	93%
2	Chris Fletcher, Stockport	86%
3	Jack Gill, Northallerton	83%
4	Anthony Musson, Preston	82%
5	Thomas Scoffham, Nuneaton	80%

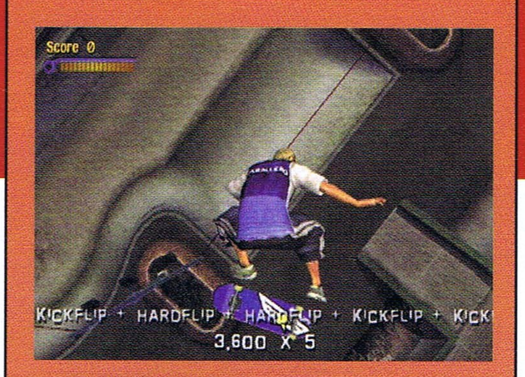
Fastest time achieved taking out the Star Destroyer in Razor Rendezvous.

1	Simon Thomas, Solihull	0:22
2	Dave Everey, Cheshire	0:24
3	Paul Bowers, Wolverhampton	0:32
=	Gavin Maidment, Surrey	0:32
4	Alan Dyer, Maidstone	0:33

On Death Star Attack, we don't want to see you shoot three TIEs with homing torpedoes for 100 per cent accuracy – that's for maggots. We want to see video footage of REAL skill. Pics are fine for the other two.

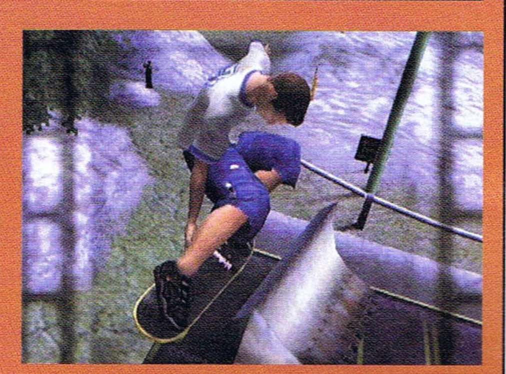
TONY HAWK'S 3





Highest point score on The Foundry level.

1	Andrew Nizinskyj, Barnsley	8,436,013
2	John Copeland, Co Durham	4,203,016
3	David Peacock, Co Durham	3,886,325
4	Mickey Ieronymides, St Albans	3,255,466
5	Chris Hepworth, Pontefract	2,691,264



Highest trick combo on the Canada level.

1	Andrew Nizinskyj, Barnsley	7,002,912
2	David Peacock, Co Durham	3,886,325
3	Gary Lord, Hull	2,173,200
4	John Copeland, Co Durham	1,879,038
5	Kieran Cornwell, London	1,589,816

Highest score on the Rio level.

1	Andrew Nizinskyj, Barnsley	4,225,882
2	Mickey Ieronymides, St Albans	4,225,882
3	David Bennett, Isle of Man	4,095,129
4	Andrew Cooper, Surrey	3,786,550
5	John Copeland, Co Durham	3,283,355

Remember, Tony Hawk's 3 is blinkin' hard, so you'll need to put in the hours – once you have, get us your proof of the end screen in either photographic or, preferably, videographic form. Ta very much.

SEND YOUR ENTRIES TO... I'M THE BEST, NGC MAGAZINE, 30 MONMOUTH STREET, BATH, BA1 2BW



WAVE RACE: BLUE STORM



Your best race time on Aspen Lake in Normal mode.

1	Paul Holmes, Edinburgh	0'21"144
2	Daniel Dunn, Boston	1'01"633
3	Frantzeskakis Dimitris, Greece	1'03"930
4	Robert Watson, Renfrewshire	1'04"176
5	Dave Every, Cheshire	1'04"329



Your best stunt score on Lost Temple Lagoon.

1	Steven Lockwood, Bradford	35,545
2	Ben Tatlow, London	33,160
3	Jon East, Manchester	26,254
4	Frantzeskakis Dimitris, Greece	11,019
5	John Copeland, Co Durham	10,624

Your best lap time on Southern Island in Normal mode.

1	Daniel Dunn, Boston	0'16"587
2	Andrew Cooper, Surrey	0'18"712
3	Benjamin Hayes, Berkshire	0'18"799
4	Dave Every, Cheshire	0'18"926
5	Frantzeskakis Dimitris, Greece	0'19"679

Fancy some? Again, we'll need cast-iron proof of your achievements – video is our choice medium, although we may also accept some photographic evidence, provided – of course – that it hasn't been altered or messed with in some way.

CRAZY TAXI



How much money you can nab in the Ten Minute Mode.

1	Phil Sturgeon, Bristol	$12,758
2	Alistair Kendall, Bristol	$12,340
3	Billy Keach, Essex	$11,693
4	Steven McKeon, Middlesex	$9,875
5	Karl Davies, Lanarkshire	$9,520



What your longest jump in Crazy Jump is.

1	Andrew Cooper, Surrey	381.95m
2	Thomas Sherwood, Cheshire	356.25m
3	Alistair Kendall, Bristol	351.63m
4	Jonny Elstree, Nottingham	346.98m
5	Billy Keach, Essex	339.81m

What's your highest Crazy Drift combo?

1	Andrew Cooper, Surrey	109
2	Anthony Henderson, Manchester	58
3	Mark Grafton, Ayrshire	31
4	Billy Keach, Essex	19
5	Steven McKeon & Nicky Day	17

For this one, we'll accept photographic or video evidence, but we won't accept 'fiddled-with' photos and we won't accept bribes, either. You know who you are… Well, on second thoughts, it depends how much you're offering.

SONIC ADVENTURE 2



How many rings you can get at the end of the Juggernaut chase section.

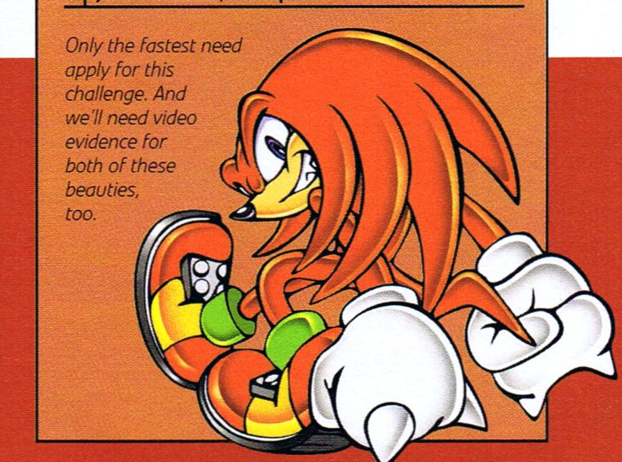
1	William Thomas, Shropshire	440
2	Adam Ely, Weybridge	437
3	Robert McGuire, Co Dublin	334
4	Steven McKeon, Middlesex	307
5	Jason Roberts, Stockport	87



What time you can notch up on Escape from the Military Base.

1	Barry Templeton, Kilmarnock	01:43:57
2	Thomas Sherwood, Cheshire	01:44:00
3	Sam Ely, Weybridge	01:45:90
4	Nicholas Gill, Exeter	01:47:59
5	Jason Roberts, Stockport	01:51:43

Only the fastest need apply for this challenge. And we'll need video evidence for both of these beauties, too.





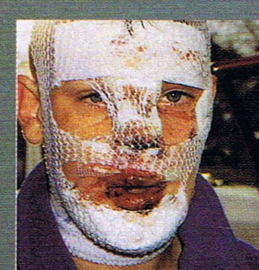
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WITH LOTS OF
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BASE
Jamie Tomkins
DCSHOECOUSA

30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW

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STAR LETTER

WIN YOURSELF A BRAND-NEW GAMECUBE GAME!



'Despondency'

I have been a reader of **NGC** (and N64) for some years now, and up to now you usually seem to have kept up quite an optimistic view despite constant delays, changing launch dates and Nintendo's eccentric PR. However, in issue 74 I detected more than a hint of pessimism at the future of the Gamecube. Apart from your puzzlingly downbeat End GC, there was an article on the rumour that Nintendo will stop making console games in the future and move to mobile technology, a surprisingly disappointing review of *Starfox Adventures*, and endless comments from readers about Rare leaving Nintendo for Microsoft. After reading the magazine, I felt that there was a general feeling of despondency about the Gamecube's future. But I love my Cube! It's like being part of an exclusive club. So then, why the long faces?

Paul Harries, via email

***Starfox got 72 per cent! That means it's a good game – not a great one, but certainly not a terrible one. Just because it didn't get top whack doesn't point to a loss of faith on our part. We love Nintendo as much as we ever did (wait 'till you play Metroid – it's amazing) – and the Rare story was upbeat, we thought – sure, some readers were plainly very upset, but as we said, it's no reason to be depressed about Gamecube. How is that despondent? That said, it's healthy to be critical rather than blindly optimistic, but we're as joyful as ever when it comes to dedicating ourselves to the Best Games Company In The World Today. We love Nintendo, despite their little foibles. End GC was perhaps a little too subtle, though – most of the Rare sign got cut off by the printers…* Ed**

'Abusive frogs'

After reading your glowing review of *Animal Crossing* in your December issue I made a dash under the sofa cushions to collect as many pennies as I could find in order to go out and buy it for my collection. As I took one last glance at the beautiful glossy pictures to tide me over, I was horrified to read that there is no release date for the UK and that it's only available on import. Determined not to be denied abusive frogs and guitar-playing dogs of my very own, I set out in search of more information in the nest of deceit and half-truths that is the internet. Most sites just made me weep with lament that this game may not be mine but a couple gave me something that spurred me on, saying that the game is TBA 2003, or even will be out just before Christmas. Not wanting to get my hopes up too much I decided to ask you at **NGC**, a much-respected source in my eyes, if you can confirm this, or should I just hunt these people down like the lying dogs they are? I would be grateful for any information you could give. I worship at your altar **NGC**!

Paul Wye, via email

***You probably shouldn't hunt anybody down, but the depressing news is that Animal Crossing still hasn't been officially confirmed as getting a UK release (don't believe those rumours of March you've been hearing). The problem isn't just that the game – which contains a huge amount of text – requires time-consuming translation into five European languages, it's also that it contains region-specific public holidays and other such details. We'll let you know any news, but we desperately hope it comes out sooner rather than later over here, as it's a magical game.* Ed**

Bonus Letters

There wasn't enough time in eternity to explain to him why he was wrong.
Alasdair Corbett, via email
***Exactly how wrong was he?* Ed**

A good way to trick people like, say, magazine editors, is to give them a piece of paper with P.T.O. written on both sides!*
Robin Corbett, vie email
*Made you look!
***What? Why, you little… (shakes fist)* Ed**

The sound is incorrect and there is only one player playing! Morons! Also, Kittsy is a murderer.
Paolo, via email
***It's never been proven, you know.* Ed**

I'm sure Toots (my pet T-rex) would love a nice human casserole.
Jonathan Challinor, via email
***Interesting.* Ed**

URTXTS

Kittsy is a ladyboy! I have proof! Evil Eddie ■ Everyone Will Die. Cpt Black ■ I want Animal Crossing NOW! RH ■

'A word with'

We lost Kenny but gained Butters – not so good. We lost Rare but gained Free Radical Design – not so bad at all. I have *TS2*, a great *GoldenEye*-beater, plus a Mapmaker as well! Great stuff, I say. Now all we need is for the Big N to invent a USB/memory card reader so people can create multiplayer levels, then upload them to a Nintendo/Free Radical website for other Nintendo players to download. They could even have Level of the Month competitions. Better still, Nintendo and Free Radical could design levels for download. Have a word with Shigsy and see what he thinks.

Elliot Jefferson, Hemel Hempstead

***Great idea! We had a word with Shigsy, but all he said was "Who the hell are you? And how did you get past security?" before releasing the dogs.* Ed**



△ Mario Party. A party – with Mario.

'This older amateur'

About all these complaints that *Luigi's Mansion* is a bit short – okay, that's right. But look at the bright side. *Luigi* is a perfect game for a hardworking father like me who hasn't time to play every day, and to see the end of a game within a reasonable timespan. It's a beautifully created game, too – not too hard for this older amateur. My nine-year-old son beats me at almost every game by now. But I look at the bright side – that way, I know my place. By the way, I started *Resident Evil* two weeks ago (Monday night is now my *Resident Evil* night when my son is in bed), and I'm looking forward to many thrilling and exciting evenings. I just hope I'll finish it within a year, so I can start *Eternal Darkness*. Oh, and I have to buy *Mario Party 4*, as my son and I are huge *Mario Party* fans. I've even got loads of SNES and N64 games I haven't finished yet. And next year, the new *Zelda*… You know, life is just too short for all these wonderful



HONOURABLE MENTIONS
Thanks to everyone else who wrote, emailed and texted us this month.

You included: Meg Cheese, via email; Edward Jones, via email; Thomas Moon, via email; Ross Rankin, via email; Steven Boorman, via email; Joey Mousepad, via email; Christopher Lewis, via email; Peter Gail, via email; Dan Abrey, via email; Christopher Walken, Sleepy Hollow; Adam Meredith, Stafford; Daniel Todesco, Rickmansworth; Joe Timms, via email; Angela Taylor, via email; Stuart Fryd, via email; Stephen Bent, via email; Andrew Griffiths, via email; JS Bains, via email; Tiarnan McNulty, via email; Richard Townrow, via email; Nick Spera, via email; C. Eccleston, via email; Raffles, gentleman thief, via lavender-scented epistle; Tom Croft, Reading; David Press, via email;

Nintendo Games. Keep up the good work.
Robin Kuipers, Netherlands

Hear, hear! Games are about so much more than sheer length. It's about quality and fun too. Here's to many more Monday nights and great games. Ed

'Uncontrollable need'

I would just like to express my opinions on two of the games you reviewed in Issue 74 – *Animal Crossing* and *Starfox Adventures*. I couldn't agree more with you about *Animal Crossing*. I am most definitely impressed with the inner depth and core of *AC*. Its 'feel' is like none other and it's so utterly addictive. I just cannot help but wonder what is happening when I am not there and I have an uncontrollable need to play it for at least 20 minutes every day… how can picking up weeds, running to collect a handkerchief, or posting a letter be addictive fun? But it is. I also have to admit that I am pleasantly surprised with the text in the game. Utterly humorous. Actually, some of the content is extremely 'mature' – ever seen Toy Story or Monsters Inc? I feel that Nintendo have captured that similar humour perfectly. As you say, it's "the most unique thing Nintendo have released in years"

But then we come to *Starfox*. Overall, I found the 'feel' very different to almost all Rare games. Right from the start, it seemed to be different. From the extremely unimpressive Rare logo (watch the first two minutes of *Eternal Darkness* and then the first two in *Starfox*), Rare didn't seem to be themselves. However, I do believe the review was slightly too negative. Nowhere did it mention the extremely positive things, such as the atmosphere in some of the temples and the cut-scenes; very dark, moody and even quite inspiring in places. Also, there was no mention of the Fear Test. Surely its potential should have not gone unmentioned. But where is the replay? Never have I played a Rare game with literally no replay value.
Adam Stone, via email

***We'll say it again – Starfox, as gorgeous as it was, was a disappointment. And to be fair, Martin did mention the graphical excellence, but it's hard to feel excited about visual flair when the experience behind it is so underwhelming. And while we're glad you enjoyed the Fear Test, it was really nothing more than a* Tony Hawk's*-style balance metre. Hardly the stuff of which great games are made of.* Animal Crossing*, though – now* there's *a brilliant game.* Ed**

'Big, bold, deliciously'

In response to your response (cough) in issue 74 to Nick Hall from Devon, I'm afraid he's right. While it was nice to see more of Ninty's TV adverts at launch than usual, they seem to have quickly dissipated into N64-era nothing-ness. What is most annoying is that this situation is only apparent in the UK and Europe, where Nintendo almost fails to barely mention real console pushers such as *Mario Sunshine* or *Starfox Adventures*. To get the basic facts let's look at Nintendo's advertising strategy in the US – more Cube Clubs; nationwide competitions; involvement in large-scale charities and big, bold, deliciously surreal cinema ads for upcoming titles such as *Zelda* and *Metroid Prime*. What have we got? Des Lynam's moustache and "exciting press releases" courtesy of the master of excitement himself, David Gosen. Yay.
Arthur Plant, vie email

***You're correct about how we suffer in comparison to the US, marketing-wise, but then Nintendo of America is pretty much a law unto itself and fairly autonomous as far as that kind of thing goes. Nintendo of Europe is based in Germany and has a whole continent of wildly differing territories to think about – is it any wonder their advertising in the UK is piecemeal? But we still don't agree about this being similar to the N64 situation. At the time of writing, in the last couple of weeks we've spotted ads for* Starfox Adventures, Eternal Darkness *and* Metroid Fusion. *Not bad at all.* Ed**

Bonus Letters

I thought it may interest you that *Evolution* on the Dreamcast is a giant cauldron of arse-juice .
Anonymous, via email
What an unpleasant image. Ed

Out of all the wheels available, which do you think is the best?
Alan Murray, via email
The round one. Ed

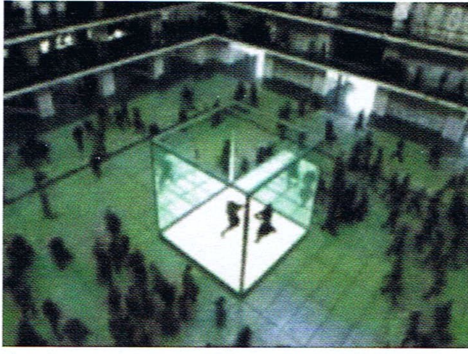
Has everyone gone mad? I feel like I'm taking crazy pills!
Alex May, via email
We know the feeling. Ed

Please give me information or I may just suck my car exhaust until I die a very smelly death.
R Simons, via email
How dreadfully unpleasant . Ed

What kind of sick fantasy do you have with Peppy and Slippy?
Sean Roper, via email
It's all in Martin's head – don't drag the rest of us down with him. Ed

URTXTS

I lv the sml of nplm n th mrnig - Rob D ▪ Make Pilotwings for GC - but with guns! Alan ▪ I H8 Rare. Tony Richmond


△ We want to see more Nintendo TV advertising, right?

'Biggest nuke'

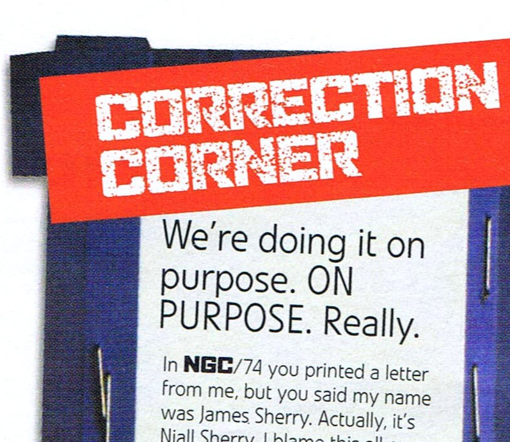
I think of the console wars as a real war. All the games are bullets. The companies are bombs. But thanks to Microsoft we've lost Rare, our biggest nuke and the reason to buy a Gamecube. Please give me five reasons not to go to Game and buy an Xbox.
Name not supplied

***How depressing. Rare were the only reason to own a Gamecube? What about Nintendo themselves? What about Silicon Knights? Retro Studios? Capcom?* Mario *and* Zelda *and* Metroid *and* 1080° *and* Resident Evil *and* Viewtiful Joe*? Besides, there's nothing wrong with having both an Xbox and a Gamecube. Then you get all the brilliance Nintendo have to offer, and those games from Rare that you so obviously want. If you must have some reasons to prevent you from buying an Xbox, though – and how silly is that? – just read through this magazine. You'll find hundreds.* Ed**

'Huge new branch'

Recently, there has been a lot of talk about the lack of original games on the Gamecube. As has been mentioned in your magazine, some of the causes for this are the lack of ideas for new games and unwillingness to risk losing money on new ideas. However, there is one major point that a lot of people seem to have missed; is it really fair to compare the new generation of consoles with the previous one in terms of originality? The switch from SNES to N64 was the biggest jump between two generations of consoles so far, as it meant that for the first time 3D games were really practical. As a result, a large number of games were created that simply would not have been possible before. The switch from N64 to GC is not like this – it allows developers to improve on ideas used previously, but there is no huge new branch of gaming to be explored. In this case, it is more like NES to SNES and when you look back at it, how many totally original games did they have in the first year? The only ones I can think of are *Pilotwings* and *Super Mario Kart*.
Chris Rickard, via email

Couldn't agree more. Remember seeing* Mario 64 *for the first time? It was like experiencing



CORRECTION CORNER

We're doing it on purpose. ON PURPOSE. Really.

In **NGC**/74 you printed a letter from me, but you said my name was James Sherry. Actually, it's Niall Sherry. I blame this all on that Joss Beckham guy: things have gone downhill since he took over the magazine.
James Sherry, via email

Ho ho! Ed



In **NGC**/72 on page 40, the picture at the top in the middle has under it: "Notice the similarity with the *FFXI* character below", when in fact the picture below was of a character from *FFIX*. I'm so smart!
Andrew Wardle, via email

Smart, or simply able to distinguish between characters from different games? Eh? Eh? Eh? Ed



Cairn McDonald, via email; Simon Unwin, via email; Darren Deardry Bobbinsworth, Tuskington; Grunty the love-whale; Sam Wallis, Bolton; David Walker, Hull; Steve Collier, via email; Wingwong Billabong, Little Woggawogga; Daniel Jones, via email; Eric von Lustbader, Germany; Darren Bullman, Essex; Stuart Deane, York.

Grintendo!

EVERY MONTH, WE'LL TEST YOUR JOKES ON A FAMOUS CELEBRITY. IF THEY GIVE IT THE THUMBS UP, YOU WIN A GAME OF YOUR CHOICE. DEAL?
THIS MONTH: DAVID CUTHBERTSON, VIA EMAIL

NGC SPECIAL GUEST CHRISTOPHER WALKEN in Sleepy Hollow

WRITE TO... GRINTENDO/MAILBOX/NGC/30 MONMOUTH STREET/BATH/BA1 2BW/OR EMAIL NGC@FUTURENET.CO.UK

Mr C. Walken appears © Kobal

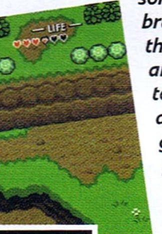








Unsuccessful!
I'M A HORSE, AND EVEN I THOUGHT THAT JOKE WAS RUBBISH. OFF WITH YOUR HEADS, AND SO ON.





something utterly new for the first time, a brave new evolution of videogames. Now that we're used to 3D games, it'll take another evolutionary leap for 'originality' to surprise us again. But where do you go after 3D? It won't happen for another generation or two. But in the meantime, games like Mario Sunshine *and* Metroid *are more than enough to keep us happy.* **Ed**

'Mental health'

You cretinous, er, cretins! Issue 73, page 59; "The game's bad guy – but who is he really? We're not saying...", only dedicating a quarter of a page to the git! THEN I turn to page 95, and a certain someone is staring at me with black beady eyes, wearing a suspicious hanky thing with a strangely recognisable nose and 'tache slapped on it, avec a 'Gadd Wand' (as I like to call it). Being a person who is poor with a Gamecube with no TV (no TV!), I obviously don't have *SMS* yet. This'll do something to my mental health, you know. Soon all I'll be able to do is sit around in Hawaiian shirts all day and listen to Björk.
Tom Kinch, via email

We're sorry – it was an oversight on the art department's behalf. They've been soundly whipped, don't worry. But, you know, who did you think was going to be the bad guy of Mario Sunshine? Honestly – who? And why on earth did you buy a Gamecube if you haven't got a telly. That's sheer cock-eyed lunacy! LUNACY! **Ed**

'Rotting code'

I am writing to you about the matter of 'lazy' ported games. I don't mind the occasional go on a PS2, but I bought a Gamecube as it is demonstrably technically superior. But if this is so, why aren't multi-format games built directly for the Gamecube, then ported to PS2? You'd think so, wouldn't you? But no – they dig up the corpse of the PS2 game, defile its rotting code and re-bury the monstrosity upside-down in the Gamecube necropolis, meaning we eventually just get another over-hyped, mediocre game. By this time, the PS2 clan have already moved on and we lag behind, playing their cast-offs. It's a disgrace!
Alex Brown, Stoke-on-Trent


△ ***Timesplitters 2*: great cross-platform fare or what?**

What a charming turn of phrase you have. The crux of the matter here is twofold: PS2 is the market-leading machine, so any multi-format title is going to lead on Sony's box. It stands to reason as it'll sell more. Secondly, multi-format games are developed for the lowest common denominator, technically speaking, thus making development easier and more unified – there's no chopping or changing for the 'weakest' machine, meaning everyone gets the same version of the game. The reason we have to wait longer for multi-format games, though, is that submission and manufacturing times for Gamecube games tend to be longer than for Xbox and PS2. Not entirely desirable, admittedly, but the fact that we're getting excellent cross-platform fare such as Timesplitters 2 *is still tremendous indeed, no matter what delays we might have to face.* **Ed**

SO TELL ME THIS...

We have the answers. The answers to your questions. Uh-huh. Yeah.

1. Is Sheikh male or female?
2. Is Fox American, Scottish, or English?
3. Which do you think is best – *Mario Sunshine* or *Starfox Adventures*?
Jackson Jones, via email

1. Female. Sheikh is, after all, Princess Zelda in disguise, despite the manly hands and, of course, the Adam's apple.
2. Being a spacefaring alien bounty hunter, he's none of them, despite the accent and resemblance to, well... a fox.
3. Mario Sunshine.

1. Now that Microsoft have bought Rare, Will Nintendo still make Donkey Kong games, seeing that they own the characters?
2. Will Rare be cheeky enough to use Nintendo characters (such as *Starfox* and *Banjo*) on the Xbox?
3. Is there any more development on whether the Gamecube is Nintendo's last console?
4. Apart from the modem, are there any other Gamecube attachments going to be made?
Ben Dawson, Hull

1. Nintendo are currently at work on their own Donkey Kong game.
2. Rare own the Banjo character; if they were 'cheeky enough' to use a Nintendo-owned character, they'd get their 'asses sued to oblivion' (as Martin put it).
3. Nintendo are currently developing the successor technology to the Gamecube.
4. Yep – there's the Game Boy Player, for starters. Check out News for more.

1) What are the chances of *Pro Evolution Soccer 2* coming out over here in the UK? I've heard it's coming out in Japan next year.
2) What's *Metroid Prime*'s official release date?
3) When's *Resident Evil Zero* out over here?
Michael Owen, via email

1. Although it's not been confirmed for the UK yet, we reckon it's a shoe-in. It won't be for ages, though.
2. March 2003.
3. To be exact, March 7th, 2003.

1. Will *Max Payne* or any variation featuring Bullet Time coming to GC?
2. My friend told me about Nintendo buying the right to a *Perfect Dark 5* or something? It sounds like a LOAD of rubbish but it never hurts to ask.
3. Is there a good stealth game out yet? I have a craving.
Mark Smith, Hemel Hempstead

1. The Matrix will be out later next year.
2. A steaming pile of effluent falsehood.
3. Hitman 2 is due for Spring next year – that'll fit the bill, eh?

Did *Starfox* get 72 per cent because of Rare's defection?
William Davis, Bolton

Good grief, no! It got 72 per cent because it's a good, but far from great, game. It looks lovely but is utterly unexciting. And let that be an end to it. Please.

URTXTS

I want PEE-S2 for my GC like 2morrow! MW = U must B joking if U fink I'm sending U lot a txt. D'oh!
Jaysee


NEXT MONTH
Oh, have we got plenty of good stuff in store for you…
THE LEGEND
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The first review of the Japanese version of The Legend of Zelda: The Wind Waker – only in NGC. Plus Ura Zelda, Star Wars: Bounty Hunter and much more…
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HOW TO...
MAKE MAPS IN TIMESPLITTERS 2

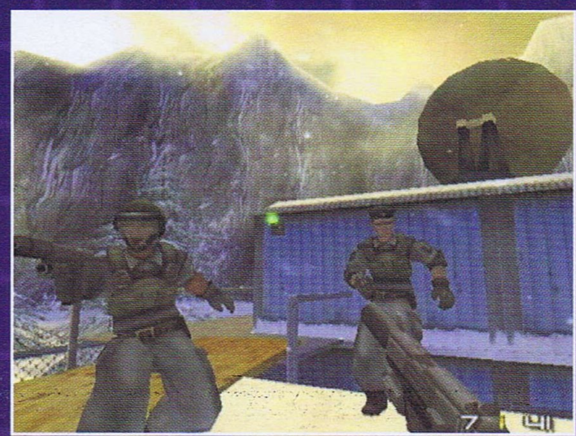
Or, more accurately, how to reproduce those classic *GoldenEye* deathmatch levels for Free Radical Design's blasterpiece. Yipper!

Now that Rare are developing for Xbox, we'll not see *Perfect Dark Zero* on Gamecube. However, do not despair, as the magnificent *Timesplitters 2* will allow you to imagine what might be, with its handy Mapmaker. And, more importantly, it allows you to relive those classic deathmatch moments from *GoldenEye* and *Perfect Dark*, as you can pretty much recreate your favourite levels, so flexible a tool is the Mapmaker.

So here you go – a rough guide to using the Mapmaker, along with our templates for some favourite *GoldenEye* levels. We've numbered the tiles on our maps so that they correspond with the tile numbers in the Mapmaker – so you'll know exactly what tiles to use. See you in the Bunker...



△ *Timesplitters 2* allows you to make Story mode maps, but we're just concentrating on re-creating multiplayer maps here.



△ It's one of the finest games we've played. And that's good.



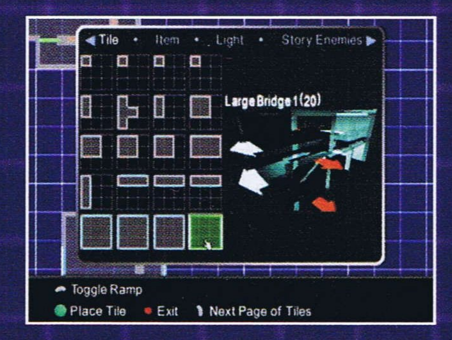
△ You can put whatever weapons you wish on your maps.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

Some hints and tips to heed before you try to make your maps.

TILES

Always, always rotate tiles before you place them, to find the best way for them to fit. Be mindful of where you want walls and where you want spaces, too – while it may seem that *TS2* has a fairly small selection of map components, every element of map design has been catered for in relatively few pieces.



TILE SETS

Swapping tile sets produces a range of completely different tiles with different sizes and so on. Victorian, for example, offers more asymmetrical pieces, with glass windows and more varied results, than, say, the sleek, smooth contours of the Alien tile set.



LEVEL LINKING

When you want to lead up to a higher level, remember that after placing a ramp, you'll have to move up a level (press up on the D-pad), then continue your map from where the topmost part of the ramp ends. Be mindful of sizes, too,



as you won't be able to place tiles if a room is too high, for example. The reverse applies when you move down a level, too.

DOORS AND WINDOWS

Select Item and pass the cursor over a space between walls or pillars; a yellow rectangle outline will appear. It means you can place a door (press A – they're signified by a white line) or a window (press B – signified by a blue line). Doors open automatically as you approach them, and weirdly, can be shot through. You can't place more than 20 doors on a given map.

LIGHTING

The different tile sets are unremittingly the same throughout – you can't, say, designate one room as a particular tile set and a corridor as another. So, to make sure the different elements of a given map are sufficiently varied, use lighting to colour-code or signify important areas. You can choose the colour, and any kind of strobe effect (you can make it pulse, switch or flicker if you wish) you might want. Luckily, lighting appears to use next to no memory at all, so don't worry if you've got hardly any left after designing your mega-map.



BITS AND PIECES

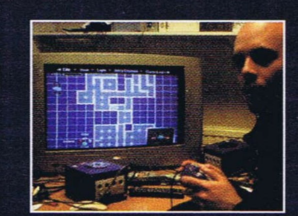
Make sure you've got at least a quarter-bar of memory left after finishing your map. You'll need it for weapon, ammo and equipment placement, as well as start points. We recommend around four start points, giving you sufficient variety as far as respawning is concerned. You have five weapon slots, so try placing two of each of the five weapons around the map, with at least one ammo box for each pair. If you've got a powerful weapon on the map, you may want to limit it to one, and put it in a hard-to-reach/strategic position. If you're not using one-hit kills, put two body armours and health in as well. If you're recreating an existing map from a different game, go and study the weapon and equipment placement. You can copy it exactly.

Finally, if there's any memory left, you can expand your level, put more weapons in or add items such as crates or gun emplacements.



WE WANT TO SEE YOUR MAPS!

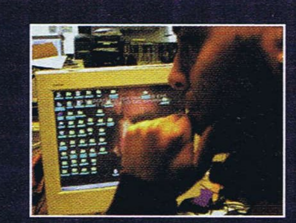
Made a good map for *Timesplitters 2*? Whether you've converted maps from *GoldenEye* and *Perfect Dark*, or any other first-person shooter, or simply made your own interesting designs, why not send them to us, and we'll collate the best and show them off in a future issue. We'll even give prizes to the best ones. However, DO NOT send us your memory cards as we can't send them back. Get hold of a digital camera, take a photo of the map layout – as we've done in this feature – and email your pictures, along with any construction hints and notes on door/window/equipment placement to the usual address. What are you waiting for? Get mapmaking!



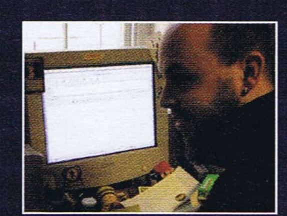
1. Get busy and create your map – fancy recreating more *GoldenEye* maps? Go ahead!



2. Get a digital camera and take a clear snap of your map layout, so we can see the tiles.



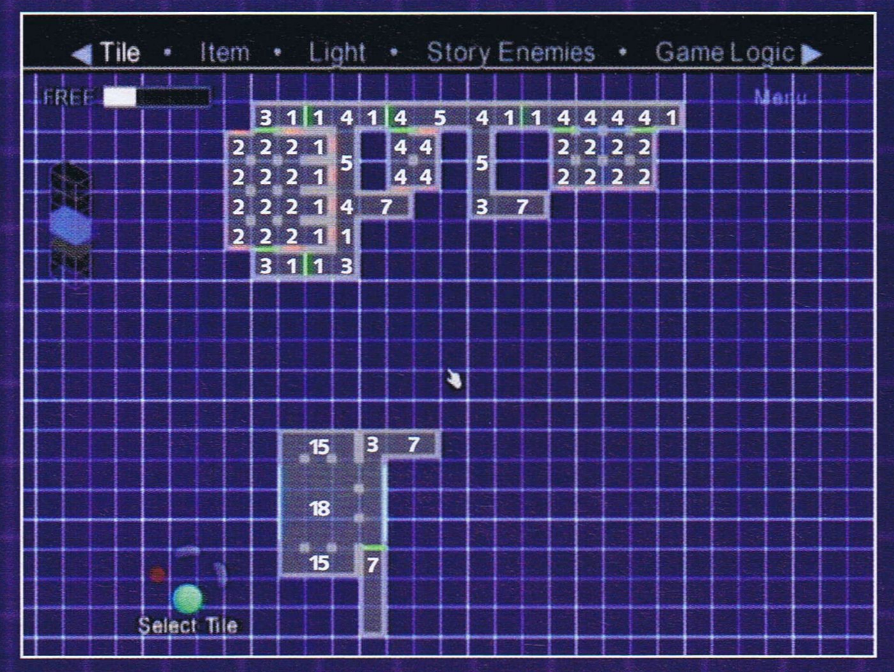
3. Download your pics to a PC and name them clearly so we know which level is which.



4. Email the pics to us at ngc@futurenet.co.uk, and we'll print the best in the mag.

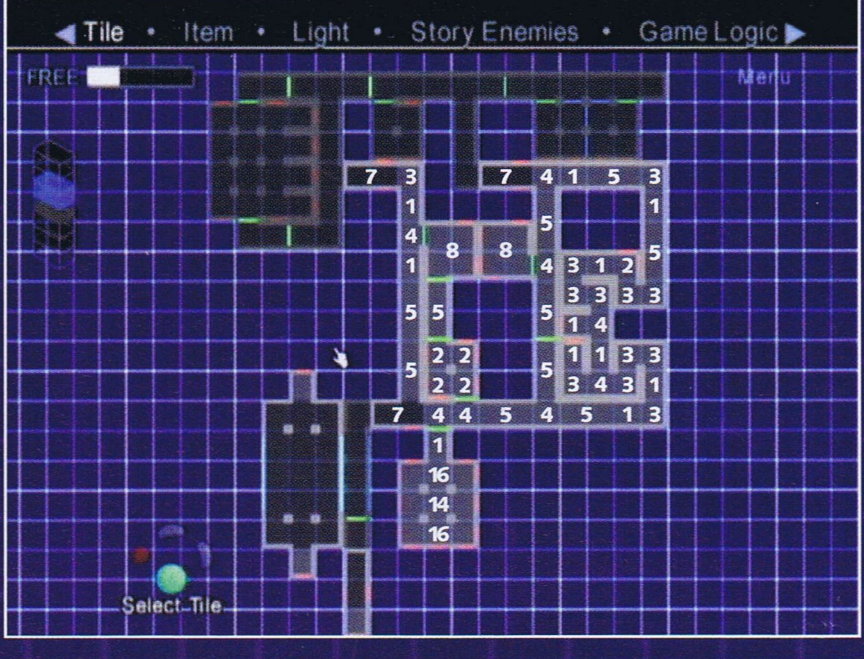
BUNKER

One of the NGC office's favourite–ever multiplayer levels, now recreated here for your delight and delectation.



LEVEL 1

As with all these maps, it's impossible to recreate the original exactly – hence the ramp adapters on either side of the main control room taking the place of the small stairways. You may want to try getting rid of some areas if you want to stick a big room at the end of the ramp leading off from the control room, to simulate the snowy outdoor area (you won't have the memory for it otherwise).



LEVEL 2

Basically this level connects the main control room area and the left–hand side of the map which contains the cells and the large room at the bottom of the map. While we've remained faithful to the original with the twisty–turny corridor at the top of the map, you might want to simplify this. Try adding some windows for sniping opportunities too.

COMPARISONS

TIMESPLITTERS 2

GOLDENEYE



1. CELLS

In *GoldenEye*, the cells form a highly recognisable part of the level. With the facility to add windows and doors in *Timesplitters 2*, it's possible to produce small, contained rooms that successfully mimic the same area, although, of course, the well at the end of the room is missing. Unfortunately there are no windows in the doors, so you can't snipe through at opponents. Pah!





2. CONTROL ROOM

As we've said, it's impossible to correctly replicate the small rooms on either side of the control area, but the ramp adapter and a single tile make sufficient substitutes and similar sniping/hiding points. You can also create bigger rooms adjacent to the ramps for better camping areas. The sneakier among you will probably want to give yourselves more room to cover the entry area…





3. LARGE ROOM

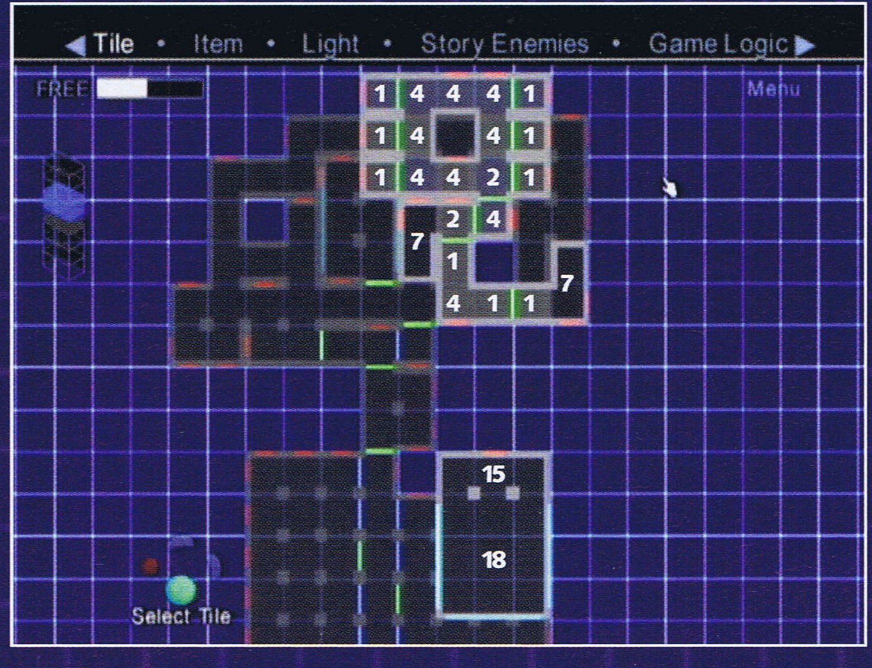
There are two entry points to this room, which has traditionally contained the body armour. Carry directly on down from the cells or take the first left as you leave the control room, and follow the ramp down to the left. You can still create the 'booth' effect from the original level here – putting the most powerful weapon here will inevitably lead to a mad rush to get it, and an entertaining firefight as you weave in and out of pillars.



FACILITY

The most famous toilets in videogamedom, born again in fancy Gamecube–o–vision.





LEVEL 1

The first level of Facility is pretty simple to recreate; it's connecting with the toilets upstairs that gave us a little trouble. But Facility's compact nature nonetheless means you can't get too far lost, and the bottling plant rooms make a good starting point. The main corridor provides entry points to two rooms, and to the corridor that runs around the outside of the level.

LEVEL 2

We haven't created a 'third' level (ie, the ducts that run above the loos) as it's fairly redundant, and you'd have to put in a giant ramp if you wanted to get up there, *Perfect Dark* Felicity–style (you can't create ladders in the Mapmaker). But if you think you can do it, give it a whirl and let us know the results. Lots of fun for lobbing grenades into, if nothing else…

COMPARISONS

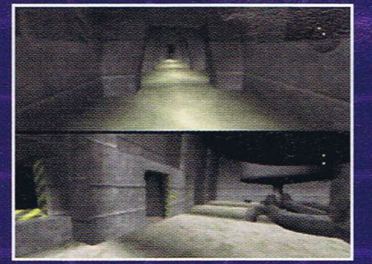
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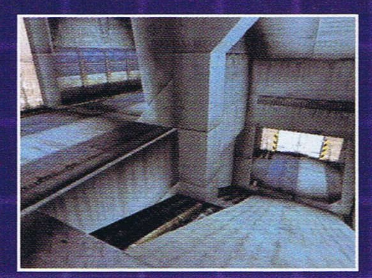
GOLDENEYE



1. BOTTLING PLANT

Easy to produce – they're simply two big rooms – and even if you can't put in bulletproof windows, as in the original, *TS2* windows at least allow you to shoot in without approaching the doors. One of the rooms has a raised gantry in the original – once again, the ubiquitous (if slightly over–large) ramp adapter makes a useful raised level.

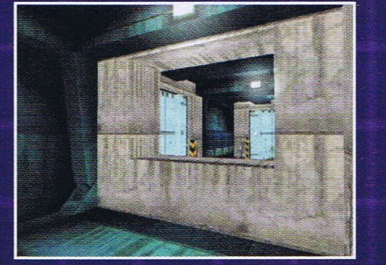




2. STAIRS AND TOILETS

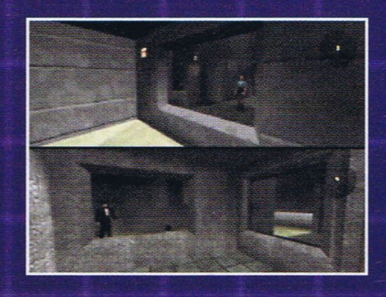
Unfortunately, there's no way we've been able to wangle the balcony from which you can oversee the main ground–floor corridor. Nonetheless, we've been able to simulate the upper area of the level well. Even if the cubicles of the loos are rather big, the layout is essentially the same, even down to the ramp running down the back that connects with the corridors.





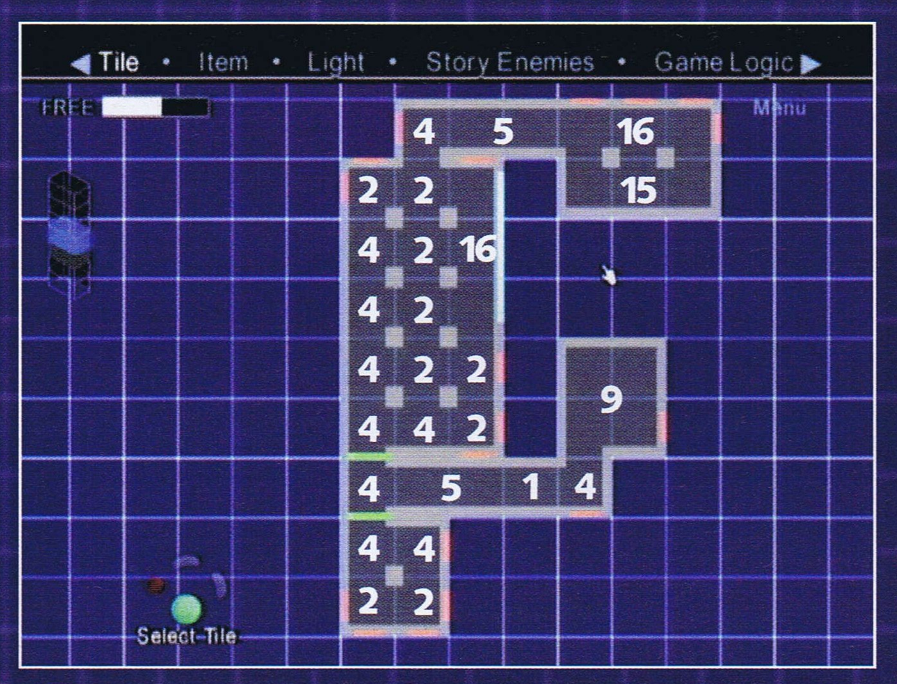
3. CENTRAL AREA

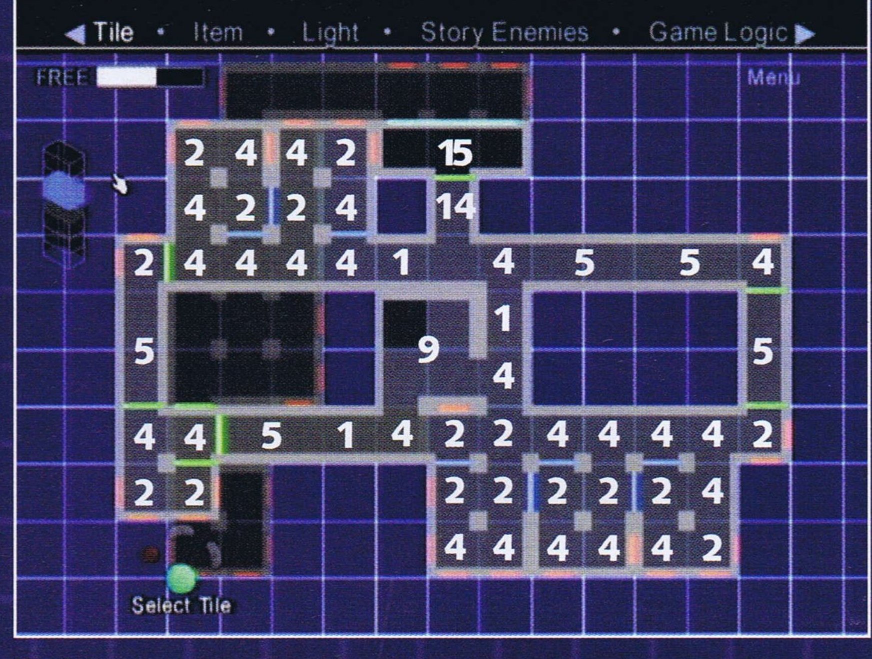
As we've said, although the ability to place windows is really useful, you can't put in the bulletproof glass we knew and loved from *GoldenEye*. Hence the area that separates the bottling plant from the rest of the level can be shot at from the small room – but this simply adds a little spice to passing through the two rooms.



ARCHIVES

Tense corridor-based blasting on two floors – one of *GoldenEye*'s most brutal maps.





LEVEL 1

The ground floor is dead simple – a small room and a large room, connected with a corridor that leads to a stair room tile, and a ramp adapter on the other side, providing two means of access to the upper level. Remember to place body armour in the large room, just as in *GoldenEye*, along with a few crates for good measure. As with all the other levels we've created here, the Industrial tile set works best.

LEVEL 2

A little more convoluted, this level, as it loops around and there are two sets of cubicle rooms, bracketed by windows to allow some sneaky cover and sniping. The stairs are central on the upper level, and there are two 'secret' corridors at either end – in the original game, one entrance to the corridors was disguised as a wall. No such luck here, but they provide handy escape routes.

COMPARISONS

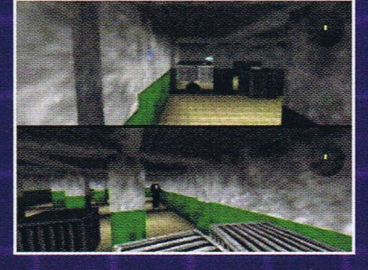
TIMESPLITTERS 2

GOLDENEYE



1. MAIN ROOM

Brilliantly, this is almost exactly the same as on the N64 which means you can stick the body armour in the same place and pile crates around it, just like the original. Unfortunately, *TS2* crates don't explode, so you won't have the satisfaction of blowing someone to smithereens as they try to get the armour, but you can expect the same kind of firefights.





2. CUBICLES

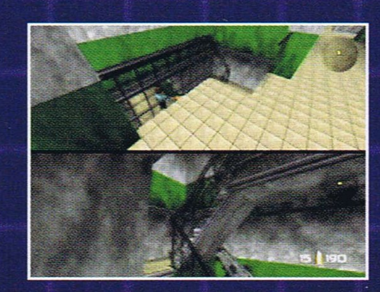
The USP of the Archives level, these cubicles are bigger than the N64 variants, but the multitude of windows makes for some superb siege-style situations. As you can oversee the 'stairs', you can force opponents to make their way to the other ramp by going down through the main room on the ground floor. Beware the secret passages, though…





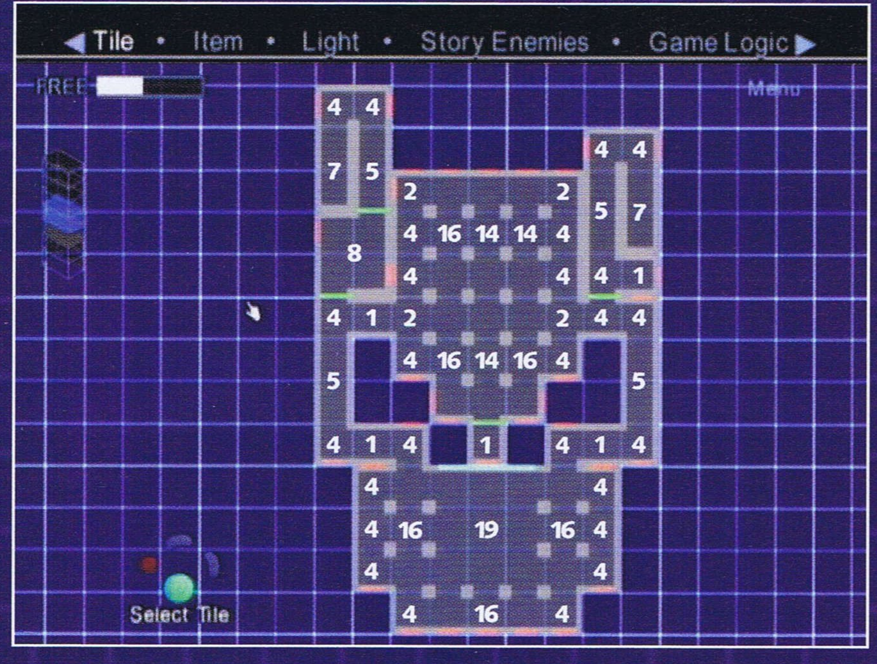
3. STAIRWELLS

The main stairwell is actually the stair room tile, which proves a pretty good substitute for the original steps, although there's a small wall at the top which isn't there in the original map. Still, it provides cover from those inevitably hiding in the cubicles. The second stairway is once again a ramp adapter, but provides some interesting cover as well.



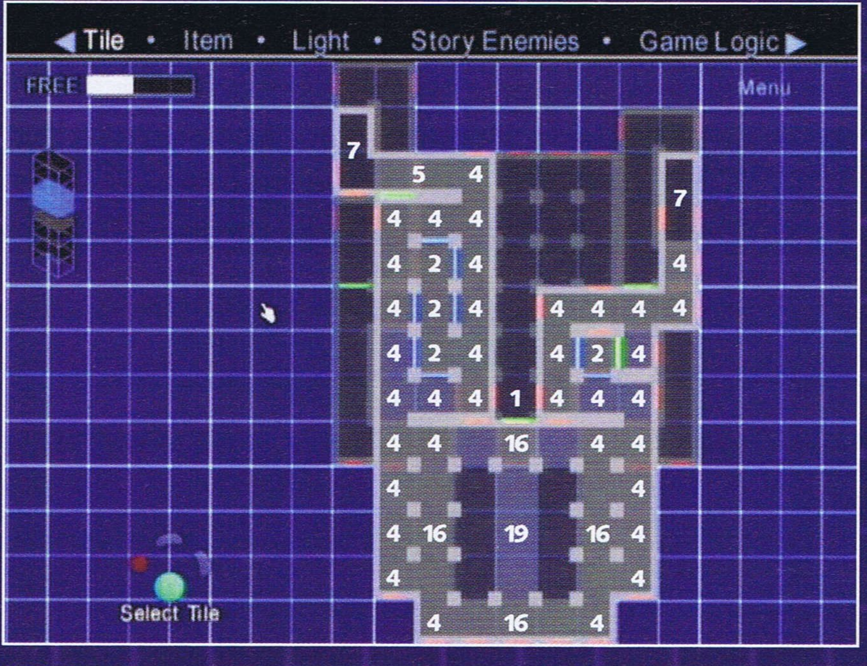
GRID

And a special appearance from one of *Perfect Dark*'s best maps.



LEVEL 1

Essentially two large rooms joined by a couple of exterior corridors, this is a pleasingly symmetrical map, although the ramps at the end are slightly different in placement due to the construction of the upper level. You'll note that the central lift can't be recreated, unfortunately, although we've provided a door for the sake of illusion…



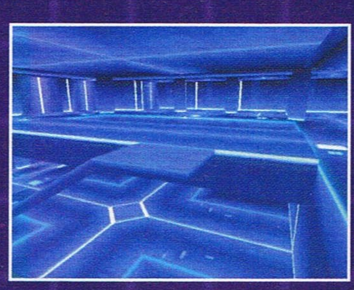
LEVEL 2

The main feature here is the corridor running around the outside of the main room, allowing for some good shooting clearance. The right-hand side provides a simple route to the rear ramp, while the other side contains a two-entrance cubicle. Again, there's no glass to shoot out. Interestingly, this map is ideal for the otherwise-rubbish Virtual tile set, because it looks pretty close to the original.

COMPARISONS

TIMESPLITTERS 2

PERFECT DARK



1. KILLING FLOOR

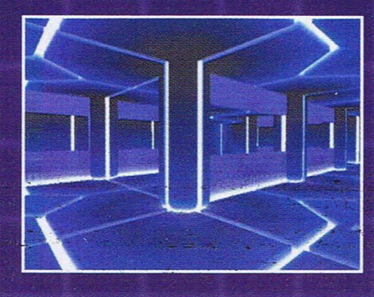
This large open area is where you'll inevitably spend most of your time shooting – however, as with many things in the *Timesplitters 2* Mapmaker, it's impossible to create the glass floor on the upper level. We've put in the large bridge room to provide an extra piece of upper-level flooring, but a completely empty central area works well too. The lack of a lift also means you have to make your way to the rear of the level to get back upstairs.



2. KILLING FLOOR PART 2

The second large room at the back of the level inevitably draws those wanting to head up the ramps to the upper levels – especially if you put some big old guns in it as enticements. The door that would usually lead to the elevator doesn't actually go anywhere but it's a good place to hide body armour in nonetheless.





3. WINDOW ROOM

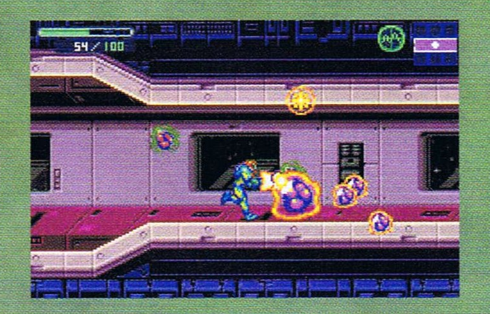
A great hidey-hole for people who want to come upstairs, and a repository for guns and ammo. The small room on the opposite side of the level acts similarly, but is obviously more compact. Try playing around with the placement of doors and windows to produce encampments with differing uses.



A 'HILARIOUS' JUMBLE SALE OF GAMES TRIVIA AND STALKING

NGC COMPENDIUM

TALK TIME



Want to know what it's like to work for Nintendo? This month it's the turn of James Honeywell to spill the beans on his typical working day…

WHO IS... JAMES HONEYWELL

James Honeywell is a Marketing Executive at Nintendo. He's currently working on Nintendo's marketing campaign for GBA and Gamecube over the mental Christmas period, which means advertising for the likes of *Mario Party 4* and the brilliant *Metroid Fusion*.

7.30AM
Arrive at work, and begin to work on emails (after getting my first coffee, of course) that have arrived overnight from other colleagues around the world.

8.00AM
Over breakfast I sit back and read all the rumours that have appeared on the internet overnight, safe in the knowledge of what is true and what is not.

8.30AM
Continuing to answer the barrage of emails that plague my inbox throughout the day, I begin work on a presentation for the sales team about an upcoming title (one that I am not at liberty to talk about). This will include information on the game itself (such as gameplay, story and key facts), plus any analysis that we have conducted on the game. Finally I would look to include an outline of the marketing strategy that we will use. This is all designed to make sure that the team are fully briefed on the upcoming game.

9.30AM
First meeting of the day arrives, which means that my emails and phone will go unanswered for an hour or so, and I can look forward to quite a few messages on my return. The meeting is with one of our favourite third-party developers, and will be a chance for us to discuss our plans for next year.

10.30AM
Back from my meeting, we have a quick discussion about the points that were raised. I can now update my third-party release schedule to include the information that I have received, which will help in our future planning.

11.00AM
I have about half an hour to catch up with my emails and do some more work on the presentation before my next meeting. However I am asked to give my approval for a consumer booklet that will be in stores before Xmas. I have already made considerable changes to the layout of the booklet, so now is my opportunity to check that these have happened before giving my final go ahead. I also have to deal with an update to my computer for some much-needed software and an age rating for a consumer DVD that we are producing.

11.30AM
Second meeting of the day arrives, this time with a rival magazine. Here we discuss their plans for the future and what we can look to do together. On returning to my desk, I find a package has been delivered. I quickly open it to find it contains samples of Animal Crossing E-Reader cards. Things will get a bit easier – if I can just find my E-Reader…

12.30PM
After the lunch meeting, there is time to check in with Customer Services to see how things have been going, especially on the internet forums, which have to be constantly monitored. Once a few questions about the GBA Player have been answered, I can immediately return to working on my presentation.

2.30PM
Receive a phone call from one of our agencies, who need a brief paragraph of information about Wario World ASAP. Email Geraint to let him know that I am currently writing this interview, which will mean that he can have it in time for another very tight deadline.

2.45PM
Having finished the Wario World text, I decide to sign some invoices, which will require lots of number-crunching and cross-references from estimates and previous invoices – not my favourite thing.

3.00PM
Having signed away a considerable amount of money (thankfully not mine), I decide to get the drinks in for the office. This is not something that I usually do as it is quite time consuming to get drinks for everyone and usually takes two full kettles' worth. However, today the office is quite quiet with lots of external meetings, so it is a good opportunity to get my round in.

3.30PM
We have major discussions over the customer booklet as not all is to my liking. However the deadline is 4.30pm so only limited things can be changed in time.

4.00PM
Continue with my presentation, which is almost finished. Hooray.

4.33PM
Last minute trade advert for Starfox Adventure appears, which is scheduled to go to press on Friday. After a brief conversion with the relevant trade person, I confirm my changes and approve the advert.

4.45PM
Now that the presentation is finished, I can settle back to do some SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis and also to produce an agenda for an upcoming meeting.

5.45PM
I am finished for the day, so I can set off for home and begin my battle with the horrendous traffic on the M4.

7.00PM
Finally get home, having narrowly missed several accidents. Time for some serious gameplay, and Samus is beckoning – however previous commitments will unfortunately not allow for this indulgence.

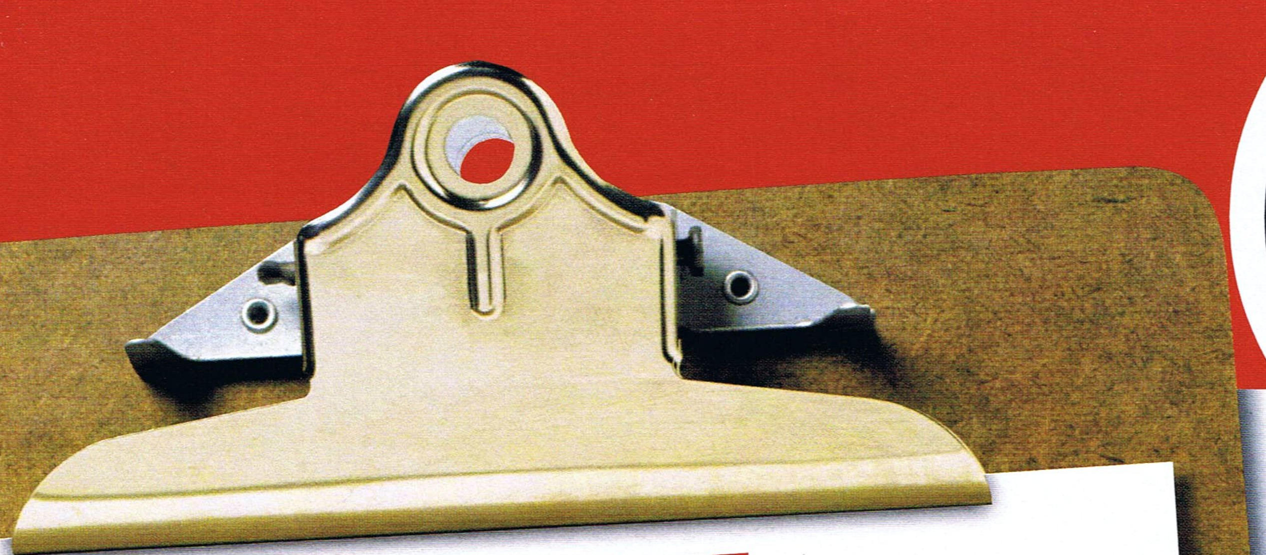
LEX LUTHOR'S SOLVE MY MAZE

W	P	L	I	T	A	D	G	R	P	E	L	A	S	O	V	K	D	M	B
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WIN A JOYPAD!

Send your solutions to:
Solve my Maze, **NGC**, 30 Monmouth Street, Bath BA12BW
OR EMAIL: ngc@futurenet.co.uk

Last month's winner: Sarah Seamarks, Snow Hill



THE EVOLUTION OF... ALIENS

The truth is out there, and it's stranger than fiction. We are not alone...

1 SPACE INVADERS

The alien invasion was actually completed 24 years ago, as Taito's hypnotic arcade game spread to every corner of the globe. Not that globes have corners, but you get the idea. They're still out there, lying dormant, awaiting fresh orders from Alpha Centauri (or another update by Activision).

2 E.T.

Reputedly coded in six weeks, E.T. is one of the worst games of all time. Legend has it that Atari buried some five million unsold copies, along with the company's reputation, at a secret desert location in New Mexico. The most sinister example of alien activity on earth.



3 ALIEN 8

If all aliens were just cute robots and clockwork mice, as this 1985 classic from Ultimate (aka Rare) envisaged, we probably wouldn't mind having them land in our back yards. Still, nobody ever got to see Aliens 1-7, so it may all have been a ruse.



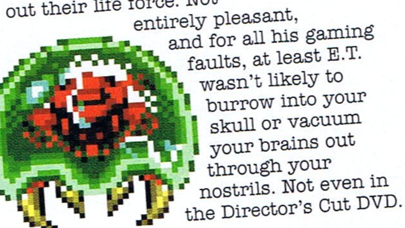
4 ALIENS

Billed as the first game that was genuinely scary. And in 1986 it was, mainly because Ripley looked unnervingly like David Hasselhoff. Plus there were aliens that jumped out of shadows and made small children wet their pants.



5 METROID

Body-snatching floating monsters that can possess other organisms and suck out their life force. Not entirely pleasant, and for all his gaming faults, at least E.T. wasn't likely to burrow into your skull or vacuum your brains out through your nostrils. Not even in the Director's Cut DVD.



6 ALIEN SYNDROME

Ah, so they're not little grey men at all. These creatures from another planet showed that mankind's future masters would be bright pink maggots that spewed slime and covered unsuspecting people in sticky yellow goo.



7 ESCAPE FROM THE PLANET OF THE ROBOT MONSTERS

Well, if those crazy humans were foolish enough to invade somebody else's planet, then they couldn't have expected anything less than imprisonment and torture at the hands of some 1950s B-movie robots. Somebody should have showed them some sci-fi, as a warning.



8 ALIEN STORM

Instead of disguising themselves as humans, these cunning intergalactic invaders wore dustbins, telephone boxes and vending machines on their heads. The only people who could stop them were a trio of alien-busters disguised as burger-van operators, in Sega's 1990 coin-op hit.



9 TOE JAM & EARL

Alien surfers. Yes indeed, this once-hip duo brought us cool music, randomly generated levels and polka-dot shorts, straight from the planet Funk-o-tron. Missing, presumed Xbox.

NGC TOP10

MOVIES THAT WOULD MAKE WORSE GAMES THAN REIGN OF FIRE

1 WORKING GIRL
Create business plans, type memos, show that even a common Shazza can rise to the top and kick 'bony ass'.

2 DEAD POETS SOCIETY
Revolutionary first-person teach-'em-up. Create poetry, inspire underachieving pupils.



3 LEAVING LAS VEGAS
Waggle the joystick to mix lethal cocktails, then see how long you survive after drinking them.

4 FREDDY GOT FINGERED
Includes a mic for shouting like an imbecile! Make sure you don't shout anything remotely funny!!!

5 RAIN MAN
Starring the amazing 'count the cocktail sticks' scene. Two… Two hundred… Two hundred and thirty… Four.

6 DON'T LOOK NOW
Stick your midget-in-a-raincoat somewhere out of sight, then press A to leap out when you spot Donald Sutherland.

7 THE STRAIGHT STORY
Race turbo lawnmowers across the USA, collecting power-ups and shooting missiles at dogs.

8 DIRTY DANCING
Comes with a dance mat, as you follow Swayze's 'forbidden' moves. Dance well, or Swayze gets executed…

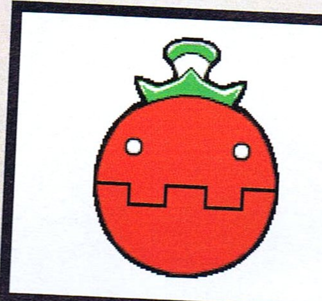
9 PRETTY WOMAN
Two games in one. Girls can dress up to attract rich men, while the lads get to cruise the red light district in a sports car.

10 TITANIC
The longest game in the world, of which the final third is spent watching your characters freeze to death.



Your guide to the Nintendo world's most exotic games.

TOMATO ADVENTURE



FACTS FOR THE TRAVELLER

GETTING THERE Import only
CURRENCY ¥4,800 (approx £25)
LANGUAGE Japanese
ELECTRICITY 3V DC power supply (2 x 1.5V AA cells)
POPULATION Children and animals only
DEVELOPMENT Alphadream and Nintendo
HEALTH RISKS Absolutely none. A visit to the Ketchup Kingdom is both flavoursome and healthy

Play a new role in the sweet and strangely delicious world of the Ketchup Kingdom.





HISTORY

The area is as rich in history as it is in vitamin C and lycopene. After the Ketchup Kingdom was divided into Tomato Lovers and Tomato Haters, the good King Abiira decided to instigate a plan to reunite the divided factions.

With the assistance of six Super Kids, King Abiira would create a revolutionary kitchen device, capable of producing cuisine so wonderful, even the Tomato Haters would declare their undying passion for the wondrous red fruit.

Anticipating a wave of marvellous tomato-related festivities across the land, the king declared a Tomato Day holiday, and invited the tomato-loving press to the unveiling of his wonder-machine – the Super Power Cooker.

The gadget performed spectacularly on its public test run, providing the audience with a magical show of light and sound. But sadly its usefulness as a cooking device had been somewhat overstated by its manufacturers.

It seemed that the Super Kids had more than just delicious tomato recipes on their minds. Their Super Power Cooker was, in fact, a device designed to destroy television sets throughout the Ketchup Kingdom. And perhaps the man behind the project – King Abiira himself – was also not what he appeared to be.

So begins the legend of Demiru, a boy who loved television almost as much as he hated tomatoes. Visitors are encouraged to discover the rest of the tale for themselves.



EVENTS

Visitors can follow in Demiru's footsteps with a number of activities organised by Seremo, the technical genius who provided vital support throughout the Tomato Adventure.

Many original 'gimmicks' – the devices used in traditional Ketchup Kingdom combat – are available to try out, including the Gear Yo-Yo, the Banana Snowboard, the Hedgehog Fireworks, and the Love-Love Do Re Mi.

ATTRACTIONS

The Gimmick Palace is a popular tourist destination, with its well-stocked item shop remaining a magnet for visitors with plenty of cash to spend. Travellers wishing to purchase typical Ketchup Kingdom apparel, such as vinyl jackets, snake-leather skirts and lard suits, should visit one of the many high-quality clothing stores. Major urban centres, such as the beautiful Soy City, are the best places to pick up a bargain or two.

The Hotel de Soy is a pleasant place to stay while you spend a day or two exploring the area.

CULTURE

Despite the name, and the obvious









national dish, the Ketchup Kingdom is known almost as much for its fine gummy sweets as its unrivalled range of tomato products. Many varieties are available, with golden gummies being the most prized. Should you be lucky enough to find one on your travels, you will be able to name your price for it at virtually any store, provided you aren't tempted to eat it for its reputed health-restoring properties.

ACTIVITIES

Apart from watching the now-restored television service, visitors can engage in mock battles with legendary figures such as Death Lilbi and Gimmick Robo.

Those who prefer less energetic ways to pass the time can tickle the ivories of the Organ of Prayer at the famous Moon Balloon, or take a trip down to see the sunken ship, which displays its suitably festive Christmas decorations all year round.

Tickets for gondola rides are a little hard to come by, and tourists should be aware that the popularity of this particular activity has attracted the unwanted attention of fraudsters.

The labyrinth area is a good place to lose yourself for a few hours, and no visit to the Ketchup Kingdom could ever be complete without checking out the magnificent Clock of Beginning, which is now in full working order.

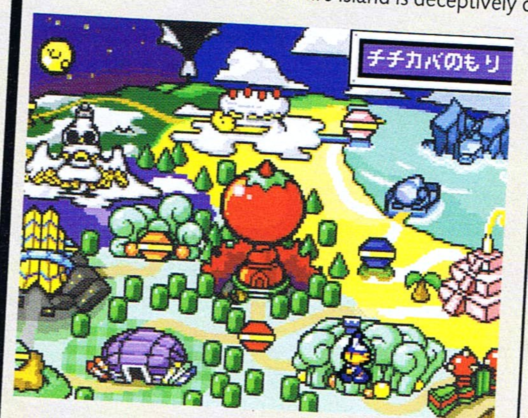
FURTHER READING

• The official website of the Ketchup Kingdom can be found at www.nintendo.co.jp. Online translation at www.excite.co.jp/world/url.

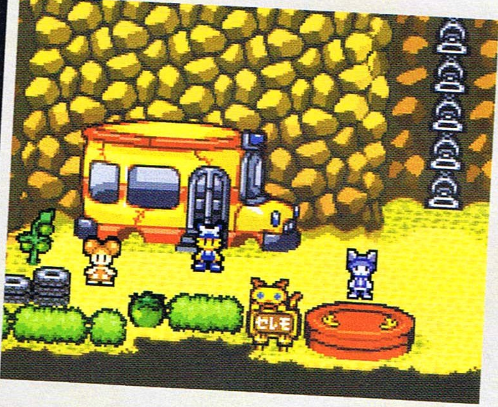


ESSENTIAL INFORMATION

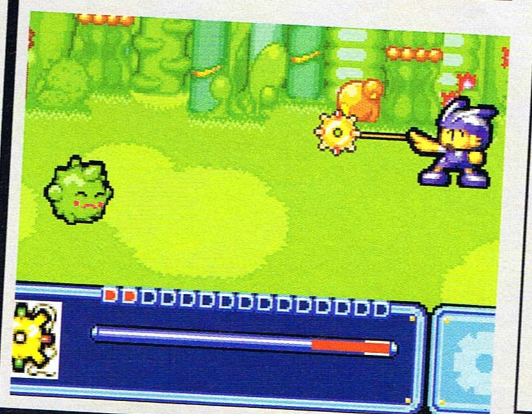
The Ketchup Kingdom is unlike most others you'll have visited. No residents are over ten years old, and the entire island is deceptively compact…



1. The Ketchup Kingdom is small but perfectly formed. Boasting environments ranging from steamy forests to icy mountains, there's something for everyone here, and all of it within walking distance from the hotel.



2. This picture of a typical Ketchup Kingdom community shows the ramshackle housing preferred by those who choose not to indulge in the pleasures of the tomato. Other areas may be more opulent.



3. Battling is a hugely popular pastime. The basic techniques can be learned in a matter of minutes, while more advanced combat skills can only be acquired after extended periods of training.



KOEI
THQ
Merry Christmas & Happy New Year
Born to Battle!
Mystic Heroes™
4 Hits
82KOs
12KOs
NINTENDO GAMECUBE
Mystic Heroes
PAL
· Create your own fighting style combining magical and physical attacks
· Wield an incredible arsenal of mystic attacks in this epic fantasy action!
· Defeat your enemies with powerful rune attacks!
· Collect runes along the way that increase the power of your attacks!
On Sale 29th November
NINTENDO GAMECUBE